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# The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

## THE REVENGE OF AHAB

What did the killer say as he pumped four .22 caliber bullets into the body of a young female Beluga whale cavorting in New Haven Harbor? "You've had it, pal"? "Go ahead, make my day"? What insult was avenged, what crime punished, what principle upheld? B.W., the ten-foot, 950-pound cetacean, dropped out of her school a year ago and took up residence along the Connecticut coast, amusing herself and delighting the nearby humans in playful encounters. She nuzzled small boats, tickled swimmers and performed such self-taught tricks that many terrestrial mammals came to believe their marine relative possessed an intelligence comparable to their own. B.W. was not, scientifically speaking, a great whale, but she was a very good one, a veritable Girl Scout. She was trustworthy, loyal, friendly, brave and perhaps even reverent. She was certainly harmless. She cruised the waters unarmed, she never demanded spare change, she did not sponsor terrorism or export revolution, she did not come ashore to take someone's job or go on welfare.

Whoever killed B.W. one fine day in May must have seen her as a symbol suitable for slaughter. Whales have been problematic partners of men at least since Jonah, and long after Moby Dick. Whale catching was the economic foundation for the flowering of New England, and although whale watching is now a peaceful pastime, it may be simply a sporting sublimation rather than a moral equivalent of the cruel hunt.

As a beast, B.W. was perhaps too good, too intelligent and too trusting to survive in man's jungle. The will to kill has never been stronger, and a complete catalogue of means and motives are retailed in the media, in the proud boasts of politicians, in the triumphant toasts of national heroes. The trick is to keep from becoming a target, which is the one B.W. did not learn.


**GORBACHEV'S ENDANGERED OVERTURES**
Stephen F. Cohen

**SOLIDARITY AGAIN**
Stanley Aronowitz

**ENDING THE AFGHAN WAR**
Lawrence Lifschultz

**THE WORLD OF MARGARET ATWOOD**
Catharine R. Stimpson

**ERIC FISCHL**
Arthur C. Danto


A NEW THEORY

## WATERGATE—THE GREEK CONNECTION

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

On June 17 it will be fourteen years since Richard Nixon's burglars were caught in the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee. These fourteen years have seen many changes, including an incomprehensible rehabilitation of Nixon himself; but we still lack an answer to one of the five cardinal questions of the investigator. We know who, we know what, we know where and we know when—but we do not know why. What were the burglars after? What were President Nixon and Attorney General John Mitchell hoping they would find?

One footprint turns up at every stage of Richard Nixon's criminal career, from his election to the presidency in 1968, to the Watergate scandal, to the various attempts made to cover up that scandal. That footprint belongs to Thomas A. Pappas, an ultrareactionary Greek-American tycoon who lives in honorable retirement in Boston. The most succinct summary of Pappas's influence on the Nixon Administration occurs in J. Anthony Lukas's book *Nightmare*. Lukas quotes a February 9, 1973, conversation between presidential counsel John Dean and Attorney General Mitchell, in which the thorny question of raising hush money for the burglars' defense was discussed. Dean asked, "Did you talk to the Greek?" Mitchell replied in the affirmative, and Dean then asked, "Is the Greek bearing gifts?" Mitchell said, "Well, I want to call you tomorrow on that." As Lukas takes up the tale:

> The "Greek" was Thomas A. Pappas, a Greek immigrant to the United States who had returned to his native land in the 1960s to build an oil, shipping, and chemical empire. Pappas had

(*Continued on Page 758*)

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# LETTERS.

## ROBESON ON GORBACHEV

*Brooklyn*

Stephen F. Cohen, in his March 29 "Sovieticus" column, correctly emphasizes Mikhail Gorbachev's commitment to economic and political reform, and his tolerance of a cultural "thaw." However, he fails to mention that the 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party approved programs for extensive economic and political reforms as well as a number of procedures for institutionalizing democratic practices in the party and the society at large.

Cohen's statement that Gorbachev has not been able to establish "an iron grip on power" is true but misses the point. Gorbachev has not sought personal power. His style of leadership has been so successful in achieving major policy and personnel changes because he has established a collegial leadership and has delegated power to those who are most competent and have broad popular support. He has not surrounded himself with "unconditional supporters" but has elevated independent-minded "doers" who are committed to both economic and political reform. Moreover, he has tried to unleash criticism and encourage initiative from below, and has greatly enhanced the power of the Central Committee.

Cohen's estimate that 60 percent of the Central Committee's members are holdovers from the Brezhnev era is inaccurate. Of the 480 (310 members and 170 candidates) in the Central Committee, 229 (or 49 percent) were elected at the previous congress (152 as members and 77 as candidates). Of the twelve voting members of the Politburo, only four are Brezhnev holdovers, and they include Gorbachev himself and Andrei Gromyko. Of the fourteen others in the top leadership (alternate members of the Politburo and secretaries of the Central Committee), eleven have been appointed under Gorbachev's leadership. The overall result is an overwhelming consensus in support of Gorbachev's reform policies throughout the party leadership.

Thus, it appears that the congress has ratified a decisive defeat of the Stalinist faction by a coalition of Leninists and Marxists. The new leadership has embarked on a determined campaign to cleanse Soviet life of the Stalinist political, economic and social culture, though making no mention of Stalin and rare mention of Khrushchev. The broad new practical guidelines for Soviet society are based on a modern version of Lenin's last writings (1921-23), while the theoretical foundations and goals of the party program have been shifted from Lenin's writings to those of Marx and Engels. Cohen ignores this.

Finally, Cohen writes: "Boris Yeltsin, the new Moscow chief, . . . admitted that . . . opposition is also rooted in 'the party Central Committee apparatus as a whole.' . . . Yeltsin's revelation casts more doubt on the extent of Gorbachev's power." This interpretation diminishes both the content and the impact of Yeltsin's speech to the congress.

Yeltsin is an alternate member of the Politburo—one of only nineteen men at the pinnacle of party leadership. His relatively short speech, which was interrupted thirteen times by applause, had people all over Moscow queuing up for newspapers carrying the text. A fuller quotation of his remarks is essential to an understanding of the change that has occurred in the Soviet party:

> Who is responsible? Well, who but us, the members of the Central Committee. . . . How many times can we tolerate the same mistakes while ignoring the lessons of history? How many times can we present certain leaders as miracle workers while demeaning the collective reason which is the principal weapon of our party? . . . Why is it that in so many years we have failed to tear out the roots of bureaucracy, social injustice and corruption from our life? Why is it that even now the demand for radical change is sinking in an inert layer of time-servers with party cards?
>
> . . . There is a medicine for this—control of every leader from top to bottom. Giving principled, sometimes even harsh, evaluations of the state of affairs and of the work of every leader, thereby helping them to remain real party-people both on the job and alone with their consciences. Incontestability of authority, infallibility of a leader, and a "dual morality" are intolerable and inadmissible under today's conditions. A system must at last be worked out in the Central Committee for the periodic accountability of all leaders at all levels.
>
> . . . In my opinion, wherever perquisites of leaders at all levels are not justified, they should be eliminated. . . . For us the criterion of social justice must always be first of all the interests of the working class. . . . Delegates may ask me: Why didn't you talk about that when you addressed the 26th Congress? Well, I can answer . . . frankly: Evidently I didn't have enough courage and political experience then.

If that doesn't say it all, it is surely a mouthful. *Paul Robeson Jr.*

## COHEN REPLIES

*New York City*

To reply briefly to Paul Robeson Jr.'s four criticisms in the order that they appear in his letter:

§ In a column of 950 to 1,000 words, I cannot discuss everything, only developments that are essential to my subject. I did not mention the "procedures" that so captivate Robeson because there is no evidence that they are "institutionalizing democratic practices" in the Soviet system. To believe that such a process is under way, as Robeson clearly does, is a profound misunderstanding either of Soviet political realities or of democracy, or both.

§ Robeson says that "Gorbachev has not sought personal power." It would be good to have his evidence for this remarkable assertion. If true, it would be one of the rarest cases in the entire history of political leadership. Similarly, how does Robeson know who else in the Soviet leadership has "broad popular support"? Does he have access to unknown popularity polls? Of course, he cannot know. And in what sense has Gorbachev "greatly enhanced the power of the Central Committee"? The power to do what? To oppose Gorbachev's reforms as it did Khrushchev's?

§ Which brings us to what is either Robeson's misreading of my sentence about the new Central Committee or his misunderstanding of the nature of that body. As I wrote, 60 percent of all the voting members are holdovers from the Brezhnev era. Robeson got his figure by lumping in candidate members, even though they cannot vote and thus are irrelevant to the analysis.

§ Finally, I fail to see how Robeson's lengthy excerpt from Boris Yeltsin's speech contradicts my reference to the latter's admission that opposition to Gorbachev's policies exists in the Central Committee apparatus. Indeed, Robeson seems not to notice that Yeltsin's complaint that "the demand for radical reform is sinking in an inert layer of time-servers with party cards" refutes Robeson's own naïve notion that there "is an overwhelming consensus in support of Gorbachev's reform policies throughout the party leadership." (It is clear from Yeltsin's speech that he includes high-level party leaders among the time-servers.) All of the evidence, some of it cited in my recent "Sovieticus" columns, tells us that Yeltsin is right and Robeson is wrong. *Stephen F. Cohen*

## RAMSEY'S RIGHT ON

*Missoula, Mont.*

Ramsey Clark's May 3 editorial, "Libya Grenada and Reagan," is worth at least the price of a year's subscription! He is right on.

Clark's blast at Ronald Reagan is forthright, extremely thoughtful and well written. This nation may possibly survive Ronnie as long as there are people like Clark, who tell it the way it is. And the nation may survive as long as there are publications—like *The Nation*—that are willing to see to it that the facts get an airing. *William H. Fisher*

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# EDITORIALS.

## Terror Tactics

The South African government's air strikes on civilian targets in three neighboring countries underscores the point, if emphasis was needed, that the apartheid conflict is in fact a civil war. Many Europeans and Americans, and some liberal South Africans as well, have tried to squeeze the struggle into the more comfortable category of a civil rights campaign, on the model of the crusade for black equality in America during the 1960s. Or they have sought parallels between the antiapartheid movement and certain anticolonial mobilizations, notably the long drive to force the British out of India. Struggles of those sorts offer the hope that nonviolent action can lead to significant social change, that privilege will be surrendered and power transferred without enormous costs in human life and property.

But a third kind of contest has already begun in southern Africa. Guerrillas regularly attack Pretoria's military outposts and lay mines in border areas, causing an increasing number of casualties. In the past few months, urban commercial targets have been hit. Last December 23, five people were killed when a bomb went off in a shopping center in Amanzintoti, South Africa, a Durban suburb. The daily battles between the army and the people in shanty townships

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all over South Africa have left thousands of blacks dead and have shattered any slim hope that the war can be easily ended by a negotiated settlement without much more bloodshed.

A South African government spokesman invoked the dubious achievement of the American attack on Libya last month as a precedent for the raids on Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana, but Pretoria's battle plan follows Israeli strategies more closely than American ones. Functionally and visibly, Israel is South Africa's only important ally in the world, providing Pretoria with the material, training, technical advice and logistical support that other Western countries have felt obliged to withhold. The United States is thus able to maintain a stance of rhetorical opposition to apartheid, to satisfy domestic and diplomatic requirements, while its overseas subsidiary and political proxy aids the white war effort against the Third World enemy.

The State Department condemned the South African attacks, just as it criticized last year's attack on Botswana. U.S. Ambassador Herman Nickel was recalled briefly after that earlier sortie, and perhaps President Reagan will make a similar gesture this time. The Commonwealth, outraged by the raid on three of its member states while a delegation of "eminent persons" was in South Africa on a peace-seeking mission, may be expected to press Prime Minister Thatcher for the serious sanctions she has opposed in deference to Reagan's demands, but the complicity of the Anglo-American powers with South Africa's policies is not camouflaged by ambiguous declarations and incomplete embargoes. Across the spectrum of the black rebellion, from the underground African National Congress to the aboveground religious leadership, opponents pointed to Britain and the United States as crucial supporters of the political and military system that is making war to maintain minority rule.

The air strikes last week were supposed to intimidate South Africa's weak black neighbors and assert its military superiority, but they will have quite different consequences in the long run. As the United States learned in Indochina and Israel is discovering in the Middle East, air raids do not eliminate opposition but invariably stiffen popular resistance. Terror-bombing escalates a conflict and helps the enemy to consolidate its support. It strengthens the extremes and eliminates the middle of the political universe engulfed in war. If that is what South Africa wants, that is what it will get.

# Theodore White

After Theodore White died on May 16, a lot of journalists rushed to eulogize him as a man who had revolutionized political reporting. His enormously popular *Making of the President* books transformed America's quadrennial carnival into a Homeric epic. White was also something of the Arthur Hailey of the political process (though a far better writer), giving us the nuts and bolts of a campaign, the personalities and the clashes, the sizzle if not always the steak. His dexterous hands molded what TV news calls the "raw vote" into heroic statuary. Still, there were those who thought his finest reportorial achievement was telling the truth about Chiang Kai-shek back in the 1940s.

We disagreed with many things White wrote, and he took the occasion of an interview on a recent WCBS-TV program, *Channel 2: The People*, to say that he differed with a lot of things he read in *The Nation*. That was not surprising; but he went on, with his customary eloquence, to say something that was. White was asked, What would happen if *The Nation* stopped publishing? He replied:

> It would be as if a great oak tree died. The forest would be stripped of one of its magnificences. But it has left so many acorns behind, which have also grown into oak trees, that the significance would be in its heritage of ideas, which you can now read in *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* magazine and *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. Its ideas would march on and I would miss the shade of the oak tree.

Let those words stand not as a tribute to *The Nation* but to the generous spirit of the man who spoke them.

# Solidarity Again

The recent strikes of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union at a Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota, and of the flight attendants at T.W.A. add an ominous note to an already dismal litany of trade union defeats. In both, workers defied management demands for concessions on wages and working conditions. On the surface, these strikes seem the latest in a long line of worker resistance to wage cuts, stretching back to the turn of the century. But what is different about the current strikes is official labor's lack of support for its own militants. While thousands of rank-and-file unionists rallied behind the Hormel and T.W.A. strikers, union officials have remained silent or, in the case of the Hormel workers, opposed them.

Since April 14, P-9's parent union has been trying to take over the local, having previously revoked strike benefits. The T.W.A. attendants, whose leadership called off their strike last week, belong to an independent union, so there was no international to discipline them. But pilots and other airline workers crossed their picket lines, and the company was able to keep its planes flying with nonunion attendants, who were willing to accept lower pay, longer hours and reduced benefits. The T.W.A. strikers found themselves in the isolated position that the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) was in five years ago. Although the A.F.L.-C.I.O. gave its official support to the controllers, the unions that had the power to shut down the airlines refused to walk out.

The union establishment's behavior toward the Hormel and T.W.A. strikers reflects two trends. The first is that, almost across the board, organized labor has adopted a policy of not opposing concessions. This is intended to save jobs and union organizations in what is perceived to be a hostile

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political and economic climate. The restructuring of world and national markets, and ideological pressure on workers to tighten their belts to make their companies more competitive, have pitted unions against one another. Bewildered and outflanked, labor leaders are scrambling for survival and have no confidence that they can win struggles for higher wages and benefits.

The effects of this "soft line" are apparent in workers' pay packets. The Department of Labor reports that in the first three months of this year unions won an average wage increase for their members of only 0.8 percent. Of all settlements during this period, 67 percent involved either no increase or reductions in pay. As a result, union membership is declining. Attracting new members is virtually impossible when unions can no longer claim significant economic gains or offer job protection—except by agreeing to wage and benefit reductions.

The second trend is national unions' refusal to support locals that choose to fight rather than agree to concessions. National union officials contend that preserving the union is more important than resistance, but what of labor's tradition of solidarity? There was a time when labor regarded an injury to one as an injury to all. No matter how futile or wrongheaded the struggle a union was engaged in, organized labor had a duty to support it.

No more. Since the advent of the Reagan Administration, organized labor has increasingly abandoned the solidarity principle. In some cases, it has done so for ostensibly practical reasons, as was the case in the PATCO strike when the machinists and the other airline unions argued that if they ordered their members not to cross the picket lines they would be subject to crippling fines and their leadership to imprisonment. Such sanctions, contained in the notorious provision of the Taft-Hartley Act prohibiting secondary boycotts and sympathy strikes, are now routinely used as an excuse for inaction.

The air traffic controllers' union was destroyed because organized labor refused to jeopardize its hard-won gains for what was dismissed as a quixotic crusade. A.F.L.-C.I.O. President Lane Kirkland made an appeal to President Reagan not to fire the strikers and he resigned from the White House Productivity Council, but that was it. In the latest struggles union leaders have not even made symbolic gestures. The flight attendants were given the silent treatment, but in the case of the P-9 strikers, the parent union took an openly antimilitance stand. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership decided to disown the Hormel workers as a warning to other rebels who would rather fight than concede.

This policy echoes that of the 1920s, when John L. Lewis of the coal miners, Sidney Hillman of the clothing workers and the entire A.F.L. sought to preserve their unions by collaborating with management rather than resisting wage cuts. But the 1929 strikes of the Southern textile workers marked a turning point. Important unions supported them, including those in the needle trade, and the ethic of solidarity turned out to be a powerful weapon. Hillman and Lewis recognized this and became key figures in the industrial union movement of the 1930s by supporting, even when it was against their better judgment, workers who were ready to fight for their rights.

The current leaders of the labor movement want to hark back to the nonmilitancy of the 1920s. They are counting on a Democratic President in 1988 to reconstitute the currently antiunion National Labor Relations Board and to push pro-labor measures through Congress. The trouble with this assumption is that the next Democratic President may resemble Ronald Reagan more than he or she does Franklin Delano Roosevelt. If that is the case, labor will be on its own. It will have to strike for recognition of the right to organize, instead of relying on N.L.R.B. appointments; it may have to join forces with feminists, ecologists, minorities and anti-nuclear groups, rather than corporatist neoliberals. If that happens, it will mean that labor has rediscovered the importance of solidarity to its survival.

STANLEY ARONOWITZ

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*Stanley Aronowitz teaches sociology at the City University of New York Graduate Center and at the City College Center for Worker Education. His latest book, with Henry Giroux, is* Education Under Siege *(Bergin and Garvey).*

## AWARDS TIME

Two stories that appeared in *The Nation* last year were included among the "Top Ten Under-Reported News Stories of the Year" by Project Censored, a national media research project sponsored by Sonoma State University in California. Since 1975, Project Censored has selected "stories about significant issues which are not widely reported by the national news media."

Leading this year's list was a "Beat the Devil" column by Alexander Cockburn titled "Remember El Salvador?" [June 1], which reported on the bombing of civilians in rural areas by planes supplied by the United States and supervised by the Department of Defense. Also cited was Herbert I. Schiller's article on growing conglomerate control of the press, "Behind the Media Merger Movement" [June 8].

For your information, the other categories of under-reported stories were: hazardous-waste disposal by the military, genocide in East Timor, the Reagan Administration's undermining of the rule of law, the U.S. birth-defect epidemic, phony tests of Star Wars components, mistreatment of the homeless by Federal bureaucracies and occupational hazards in high-tech industries.

We also note with pride that Victor Navasky's speech to the Critical Journals Conference at the University of Southern California last year received a Special Citation in the magazine category of People for the American Way's First Amendment Journalism Awards. Navasky's speech was published in *The Nation* under the title "The Role of the Critical Journal" [June 8].

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# SOVIETICUS.

STEPHEN F. COHEN

A crucial dispute over Mikhail Gorbachev's campaign to restore détente and end the arms race with the United States has developed in the Soviet political establishment. An embattled Gorbachev is arguing that his conciliatory policies are "necessitated by new thinking about the nuclear era," while his opponents charge that they are based on "dangerous illusions" about the United States.

The conflict cannot be fully understood apart from its history. In the early 1980s, the Reagan Administration's anti-Soviet crusade and strategic weapons buildup had badly discredited Soviet proponents of détente-like political negotiations as an important component of national security. For the same reason, Soviet hard-liners, who have always insisted that the United States is bent on strategic supremacy and that therefore only abundant military power can guarantee Soviet security, had gained new influence in high-level circles.

But when Gorbachev became leader, in March 1985, he immediately set himself against that militaristic trend by calling for a "revival of détente." Why he did so is no mystery. Committed to a costly and long-term program of economic reform, he needs arms control to reduce defense spending, and improved relations with Washington to counter conservative protests that domestic change is too risky in times of international tension. Hoping to appeal to a "realistic" wing of the Reagan Administration, including the President, Gorbachev pressed hard for the Geneva summit last November. Since then, he has repeatedly defended his "new approaches" to Soviet-American relations against "stone-age ways of thinking" that seem to be entrenched in Moscow no less than in Washington.

The crux of Gorbachev's argument is twofold. First, as he told the party congress in February, in the nuclear age no country can "hope to safeguard itself solely with military-technical means. . . . Ensuring security is a political problem, and it can only be resolved by political means." Second, "security can only be mutual"; it cannot be achieved by "caring exclusively for oneself, especially to the detriment of the other side." More pointedly, as he said elsewhere, "there can be no security for the U.S.S.R. without security for the United States."

Gorbachev's reasoning is a tacit repudiation of previous Soviet policies, as some Moscow officials have privately confirmed. By emphasizing political means of national security, he is trying to rehabilitate détente as the highest priority of Soviet foreign policy and implying that the military buildup under Leonid Brezhnev in the 1970s was excessive. His recommendation that the Soviet Union "act in such a way as to give nobody grounds for fears," for example, suggests that the massive Soviet deployment of Euromissiles was a mistake because it provoked the current American buildup. Therefore, to achieve serious political negotiations on arms control and even nuclear disarmament, the Soviet Union should make concessions that will lessen American fears.

And indeed, under Gorbachev's leadership, there have been a series of remarkable Soviet concessions, including a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing and on deployment of Euromissiles; a promise to remove all Soviet missiles from Europe if the United States withdraws its own, as well as to dismantle rather than relocate those weapons; and an acceptance of American demands for rigorous on-site verification of any arms-control treaties. Presumably, Gorbachev believed that such concessions would bring a positive American response, thereby vindicating his "new approaches."

Instead, each of them has been abruptly rejected by the Reagan Administration. Still worse for Gorbachev, since his meeting with the President, the Administration has taken a succession of "anti-Geneva" actions. It ordered a humiliating reduction in the Soviet U.N. mission in New York, sent U.S. warships into Soviet waters, suggested that American military measures against Nicaragua and Libya were related to Soviet support for those countries, proceeded with its ambitious program of building new strategic weapons, including a series of nuclear tests, and threatened to jettison existing arms control treaties at any time.

Not surprisingly, those "provocations" have redoubled high-level Soviet opposition to Gorbachev's conciliatory policies. As indicated by a torrent of veiled polemics in the press, hard-liners are protesting that the United States is using the summit process to "conceal an intensified quest for military superiority." They demand that the Soviet Union respond not with political overtures but with a renewed military buildup of its own, which is "the greatest guarantee of security." Gorbachev is unnamed but unmistakably indicted in these accusations. On April 13, after another American nuclear test, the military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* assaulted the "illusions of people who despite facts to the contrary still believed until a few days ago that the U.S. Administration was capable of heeding the voice of reason."

Thus far, Gorbachev has refused to "slam the door" on détente and arms negotiations, but he and his supporters are clearly on the defensive. Since March, he has even had to reply publicly to "numerous letters to the Central Committee," a euphemism for criticism in leadership circles. Denying that he has "the slightest illusions," Gorbachev has pleaded for restraint and promised not to participate in any future summit that is "empty talk" or a "smokescreen" for an American "spurt forward in arms," as his opponents have characterized the one in Geneva.

Much is at stake in this dispute, including Gorbachev's career as a reform leader at home and a historic opportunity to stop the nuclear weapons race. No American can be proud of the fact that there is an imperiled arms-control leadership in Moscow but an unrepentant arms-race government in Washington. Consider their different reactions to the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl: while the Reagan Administration could only find more reasons to oppose negotiations, Gorbachev, however lamentable his initial response to the calamity, saw it as "another grim warning that the nuclear era demands new political thinking and a new policy."

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# ARTICLES.

AFGHAN NEGOTIATIONS

# Can the Pieces Fit Into Place?

LAWRENCE LIFSCHULTZ

It is now more than six years since Soviet forces entered Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. Although their position is under no immediate threat, there are clear indications that the present Soviet leadership seeks a negotiated solution to the conflict in which its forces are engaged. The latest round of discussions on Afghanistan at Geneva were expected to conclude by the third week of May, and if trends are maintained, a major advance could be under way toward resolving a conflict that has epitomized the most recent deadly phase of the cold war and its proxy battles.

It is therefore useful to examine briefly both the diplomatic history and the origins of the events that have engulfed a region which in centuries past has been a classic arena of imperial conflict.

For more than four years the prospect of a negotiated settlement to the Afghan crisis has existed in the shadows of the diplomatic world, where few have held out much hope of results. Despite this, under the auspices of the United Nations, the conditions that could lead to a de-escalation of the conflict, a repatriation of refugees and a gradual withdrawal of Soviet forces have developed to the point where, at least at the formal level, no major substantive differences exist regarding the essential criteria that would constitute the terms of an agreement. What has been lacking is an act of coordinated commitment by the parties involved to move forward within the framework of an existing draft agreement, the main elements of which all parties have stated they adhere to in principle.

The essential features of this agreement were worked out between April and June 1983, when negotiations between Pakistan and Afghanistan took place in Geneva under U.N. auspices. At the time of those discussions, the Soviet Union indicated to U.N. representatives that it was prepared to engage in a staged withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan if Pakistan was prepared to cooperate in working out the precise modalities of a negotiated settlement. Thus, as far back as 1983 the Soviets appear to have been serious about seeking a face-saving formula that would permit an exit from Afghanistan. This is indicated by the sequence of events at the time. During the first phase of the 1983 discussions the parties provisionally agreed on the protocol of a draft settlement. It was understood that a comprehensive settlement would be based on three preliminary conditions: (1) Soviet forces would be withdrawn in stages from Afghanistan; (2) in a phased manner, refugees in Pakistan would be simultaneously repatriated to Afghanistan; and (3) Pakistan would restrain insurgent activity originating inside its borders and would actively work for an effective cease-fire.

It also had been implicitly understood by all parties that a political solution based on a compromise would have to involve some form of coalition government emerging in Kabul. The Soviet Union had indicated to a number of nonaligned states, including India, that it was not averse to such a development. But the exact shape and constituent elements of this coalition were to be left for a later time, after there had been agreement on the first steps of the Geneva negotiations, and once implementation had been initiated. However, these preliminary proposals were never put to the diplomatic test.

Following the April 1983 session and prior to the reopening of negotiations in June, important events intervened. Two outstanding questions still had to be resolved. The first pertained to international guarantees, and the second concerned the establishment of a specific timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. The Soviets gave every indication of supporting the plan elaborated by U.N. negotiators. This view was confirmed by Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Yaqub Khan, who told the press that there were firm indications, "from no less a person than Andropov," that the Soviet Union would withdraw its forces from Afghanistan under certain conditions.

On May 25, 1983, Khan went to Washington to obtain concurrence with the main outlines of the settlement. He received a cool reception from the Reagan Administration. Although the United States was unwilling to say no formally, it was not prepared to say yes. Instead, on the eve of Khan's arrival, the Administration revealed for the first time the magnitude of the covert military aid program funneled by the Central Intelligence Agency to Afghan resistance groups based in Pakistan. Aspects of this covert program were already well-known, but the timing chosen by the United States to disclose the extent of it was significant.

According to Ted Morello, U.N. correspondent for *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "It was interpreted as a deliberate effort to torpedo the UN peace initiative just when UN special envoy Diego Cordovez had jockeyed the Afghan negotiations to the brink of a breakthrough. The presumption is that the bleeders, as they are called, prevailed and persuaded the president to send the unmistakable signal that, professions of support for the Cordovez mission notwithstanding, the US is not ready for a political settlement that would free Moscow of its Afghan albatross."

Secretary of State George Shultz indicated to the Pakistan Foreign Minister that the United States considered the U.N. agreement inadequate without the prior replacement of the existing regime in Kabul. Until then it had been clearly understood and implicitly accepted by all parties involved that the recomposition of the regime in Kabul would occur in parallel with the phased withdrawal of Soviet forces, as

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had occurred during the precedent of Porkkala in Finland.

Two outstanding questions remained to be negotiated in June 1983: the withdrawal period for Soviet forces and Islamabad's commitment to support the clause of mutual noninterference. In the agreed framework, Islamabad would commit itself not to provide assistance to the Afghan resistance based in Pakistan or to permit other agencies to use Pakistan as a conduit for such assistance.

The Soviets had let it be known that they would not agree to a precise timetable unless they had assurances that their withdrawal would not risk an escalation in covert operations by Pakistan and its U.S. allies. They feared that certain quarters in the United States, obsessed with cold war "roll-back" strategies, would not be wholly averse to such a development.

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and Yaqub Khan were ultimately unable to resolve a precise formulation to the questions they faced. Previous understandings secured in April were thrown into jeopardy when the Pakistan delegation arrived in Moscow. In the Soviet view, the United States had so discouraged Pakistan's seeming readiness to reach for a diplomatic breakthrough that it became politically impossible for Pakistan to advance. Yet, three years have now passed, tens of thousands more have become war casualties and supposedly "new" conditions have arisen where virtually the same terms that were on offer before have suddenly become acceptable.

The apparent seriousness with which the Soviet Union approached the talks in 1983 reflected in part the deep divisions within the Soviet leadership over its decision to intervene in Afghanistan.

Much of what has appeared in the Western press has conveyed the image of a carefully laid and longstanding Soviet plan to occupy Afghanistan. Such simplicity may be useful to whip up jingoistic sentiments in the United States, but it hardly is a basis for understanding what occurred. According to detailed interviews with a Soviet source in Kabul at the time of the invasion, and exiled Afghans with direct knowledge of the events, a wholly different picture emerges.

In April 1978, nearly twenty months before the Soviet Army crossed the northern border of Afghanistan, a military uprising in Kabul brought the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (P.D.P.A.) to power. Its emergence was the culmination of a particular sequence of developments, the last act of which was sparked by an initiative undertaken by the Shah of Iran. In the last years of the Shah's government, Iran had embarked on an ambitious regional program designed to draw neighboring countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and the Persian Gulf states, into a new set of political and economic alliances dominated by Teheran.

According to Selig Harrison of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "In perspective, the 1978 Afghan coup emerges as one of the more disastrous legacies of the shah's ambitious effort to roll back Soviet influence in surrounding countries and create a modern version of the ancient Persian Empire." Throughout the post-World War II period, Soviet influence in Afghanistan, while significant, was hardly hegemonic. Pro-Soviet parties remained in political opposition, while the Soviet Union itself seemed content to have cordial and relatively low-key relations with what was the nearest thing to a genuine buffer state in the modern world.

Then, as Harrison argued in *The Washington Post*, "Beginning in 1974 . . . Iran, encouraged by the United States, made a determined effort to draw Kabul into a western-tilted, Teheran-centered regional economic and security sphere." A $2 billion economic aid agreement that was proposed by Teheran would have meant that Iran would supplant the Soviet Union and the United States as Afghanistan's largest single foreign-aid donor.

These external developments paralleled and interreacted with events inside Afghanistan. In 1973, following a severe famine and governmental ineptitude that led to hundreds of thousands of deaths by starvation, Mohammed Daud, King Mohammed Zahir Shah's cousin, overthrew the monarchy and proclaimed a "republic."

From the perspective of contemporary events, this was a crucial turn. In order to abolish the monarchy, Daud had entered into a tactical alliance with the Parcham wing of the P.D.P.A., led by Babrak Karmal. The Parcham ("The Flag") had long favored a broad multiclass "national democratic" front, and its supporters in the Afghan armed forces had played an important role in backing Daud's republican coup. The other wing of the P.D.P.A., known as the Khalq ("The Masses"), led by Noor Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, was skeptical that such an alliance could survive and advance the P.D.P.A.'s objectives. The Khalq advocated an independent, working-class-based party. It was a classic debate that overlaid an array of other differences, ranging from the problem of nationalities within the country to severe personal rivalries within and between the two party factions.

The alliance between Daud and the Parcham proved to be short-lived. After unseating the monarchy, Daud no longer had any use for the Parcham and soon embarked on a grander project with Iran, in which his former allies would be permitted to play no role.

In September 1975, prodded by Iran, Daud began to purge Soviet-trained military officers from the armed forces, and Parcham sympathizers from the civil administration. In April 1978 a new Interior Minister declared that the time had come to "finish off" the Afghan Communists. Soon after, the top leadership of the P.D.P.A. was arrested. There was widespread fear among the P.D.P.A. members that the imprisoned leaders might be killed. In a last-minute defensive effort their remaining supporters in the armed forces struck back and, to their surprise, overthrew the regime and killed Daud in a coup d'état that became known as the Saur (April) Revolution.

The P.D.P.A. never conceived of itself as coming to power in the manner it had, and found itself in the classic dilemma of a radical force having prematurely secured state power without a highly developed or mobilized social movement as its political basis. As time would tell, the severity of its own internal sectarianism demonstrated that it was not

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a sufficiently mature entity to undertake the tasks of social transformation that it faced. In fact, its debilitating internal disputes were only resolved by the Soviet military intervention. But this "resolution" was its own paradox, becoming the very basis on which the civil war took off in earnest.

It is important to note that when the Saur uprising took place, in April 1978, the P.D.P.A. leadership was initially received optimistically by the population, particularly in the urban centers. The reforms articulated by the P.D.P.A. with regard to land reform, education and the status of women did provide the basis on which to broaden the foundations of support for the new regime. An important window of opportunity existed in which the progressive dimension of the P.D.P.A.'s program might have provided the basis for mobilizing a wide stratum of the population on behalf of essential reforms. However, within a year it became increasingly evident that as a party organization it lacked such a capability. Within months of the Saur uprising, the fragile unity between the Parcham and the Khalq began to unravel.

It is impossible to understand the subsequent Soviet intervention without grasping the elements of this division. In August 1978, almost the entire leadership of the Parcham wing under Babrak Karmal was purged and sent into diplomatic exile. Karmal had argued that unless a broad multiclass national democratic coalition of forces was built at the early stages, the regime would falter disastrously. The Soviets essentially agreed with this position but were not yet in control of their fractious allies in the P.D.P.A. Karmal would return to Kabul a year and a half later alongside Soviet Army units, but by then the prospect of re-creating such a coalition of forces was out of the question. The act of invasion in itself precluded such a possibility.

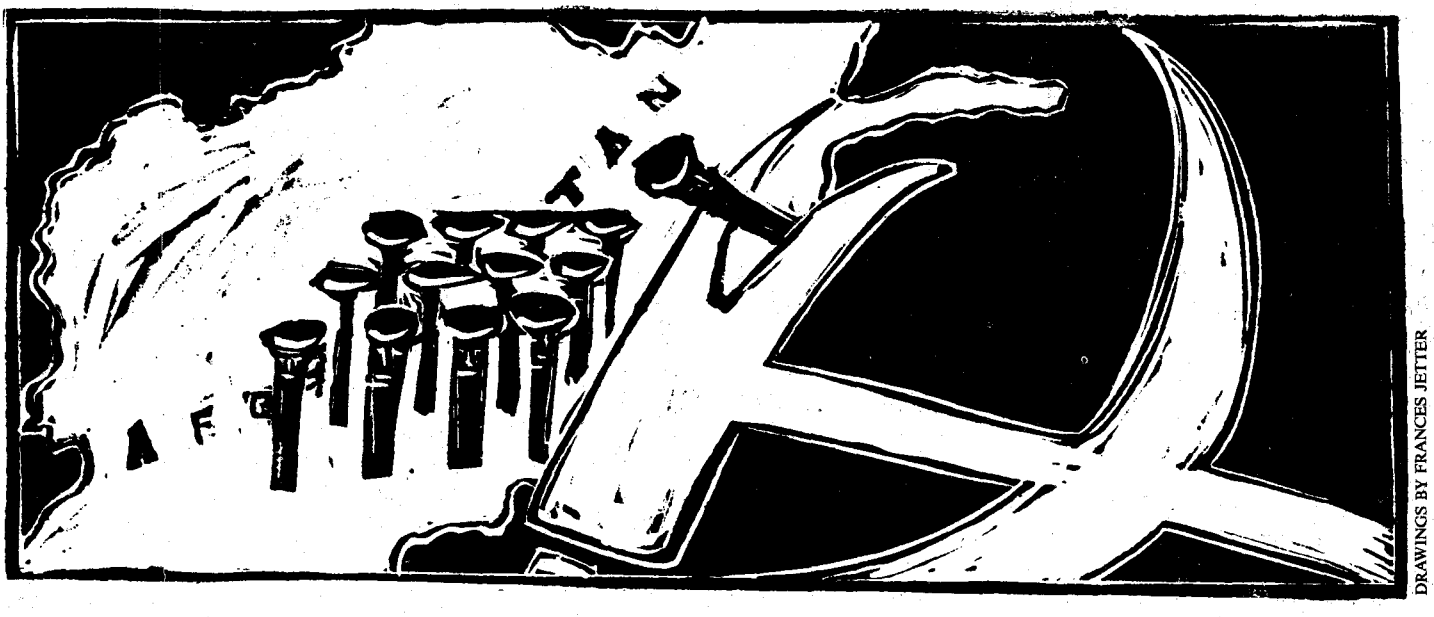
In the summer of 1978, effective control of the P.D.P.A. passed increasingly to Khalq elements under the command of Hafizullah Amin, who had been the main liaison with P.D.P.A. sympathizers in the Afghan Army before the revolt. Amin regarded himself as a nationalist, and though he needed Soviet assistance, he made it clear to Moscow that he would not accept Soviet direction. It was not a tenable position. In the Soviet view, Amin's mode of operation was a major cause of the deteriorating political and military situation in the country, driving more and more of the population into arms against the regime. Indeed, the invasion in December 1979 was the ultimate maneuver in a sequence of Soviet efforts designed to remove Amin from the leadership of the P.D.P.A., thereby bringing the Afghan party organization in line with Soviet policy.

Four months prior to their invasion, the Soviets plotted with then-President Noor Mohammed Taraki to remove Amin. The scheme failed, and Amin's own protégés assassinated Taraki, who once had been Amin's mentor and was considered the father figure of the P.D.P.A. Amin thus took complete command of the state and party. He demanded the withdrawal of the Soviet Ambassador, whom he correctly accused of complicity.

The Soviets found themselves in a paradoxical situation: they were formally supporting the man they had attempted to remove and with whose policies they continued to be identified internationally. In Moscow, advocates of intervention believed Amin could still be dislodged by a dramatic show of force and persuaded to take a diplomatic post abroad. In their view, his departure would have allowed the return to power of the purged Parcham faction led by Babrak Karmal. The first attempt to unseat Amin had failed; now they proposed a second. Its advocates argued that if it succeeded, a new political course could be adopted which would be the first step to the scaling down of the civil war.

Soviet and Afghan sources in Kabul in December 1979 with direct knowledge of events have described how the Soviet intervention backfired. Amin refused to let himself be persuaded to go abroad on a diplomatic assignment. Instead, he fought back. After twelve hours of bitter combat with Soviet forces at the presidential palace, Amin was killed, along with 2,000 loyal members of his armed forces.

The plan for a smooth transition to a more moderate coalition was a shambles. According to the independent Soviet historian Roy Medvedev:



DRAWINGS BY FRANCES JETTER

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The replacement of Amin by Karmal was meant to take place two to three days after the successful securing of the capital by the Soviet army, but it seems something went wrong with this scenario. The murder and death of Amin and part of his circle of followers and relatives on the night of December 28, 1979, was not planned, but happened as a result of unexpected developments during the securing of Kabul on December 27/28.

Although Soviet forces released thousands of political prisoners, they were hardly seen as liberators in the country as a whole. The invasion itself now eclipsed all prior political issues.

A minority faction in the Politburo had opposed the invasion, arguing instead for the curtailment of military and economic support for Amin. Those advocating this course contended that cutting off Amin would eventually bring about his demise and was preferable to the risks and uncertainties of full-scale intervention. It has been widely reported by Soviet and other sources that Yuri Andropov led this minority faction in the Politburo.

When Andropov succeeded Leonid Brezhnev in 1982, a hitherto nonexistent dimension of sobriety entered the Geneva negotiations from the Soviet side. However, with the June 1983 impasse, followed by Andropov's death, the momentum was lost. In early 1983, a few months before the June talks convened, a senior Soviet figure concerned with Afghan policy told me: "We are prepared for a negotiated solution to the conflict. However, if we cannot achieve 'Finlandization,' we will have 'Mongolization.'"

What followed on the military front was predictably brutal. Perceiving that the diplomatic option was suspended, those in the Soviet military who favored more aggressive tactics gained sway. Soviet military commanders embarked on a fierce war in order to make the Karmal regime in Kabul more secure. Local cease-fires initiated during the Andropov period in tandem with the Geneva negotiations were not renewed, and combat operations were escalated, as the increased flow of refugees into Pakistan and their accounts of widespread destruction attested.

Nevertheless, when Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the Soviet leadership, a settlement of the Afghan war became a top priority. The Soviets again indicated they were prepared to move toward a diplomatic resolution which would include the withdrawal of their forces. An article published in *Pravda* on February 14, 1985, carefully analyzed the revelations contained in a front-page story in *The Washington Post*. *The Post* had reported that covert assistance to the Afghan resistance by the C.I.A. had become the largest secret operation by the United States since the Vietnam War. *Pravda* warned that such escalation would be more than matched on the Soviet side.

The two articles made it clear that a dangerous seesaw escalation was under way in Afghanistan. Soviet forces were augmented and began operating in greater force and in closer proximity to the Pakistan border than ever before. It is significant, however, that *Pravda*, in referring to the "Soviet military contingent," had stressed that the Soviet Union was prepared "to withdraw it by agreement." The paper concluded: "All questions relating to Afghanistan can be solved only by political means. There is no other way."

The Soviets indicated that they were weary of the stalemate and were prepared to raise the stakes for Pakistan significantly if negotiations failed. While reaffirming that the existing draft agreement drawn up by the U.N. mediators remained the best option for achieving a withdrawal of forces, repatriation of refugees and a cease-fire, Gorbachev also made clear in a meeting with Pakistan's President Zia ul-Haq at Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko's funeral in March 1985 that his country was prepared to increase its forces fivefold, to 500,000 men, if the diplomatic process remained stalled and if there was an increase in Pakistan-based covert operations as predicted in the Western press.

Moscow had already demonstrated the destructive power of its military. There have been well-documented accounts of widespread suffering among civilians. About one-fifth of the population has fled to the neighboring states of Iran and Pakistan. A recent report by U.N. Special Rapporteur Felix Ermacora estimates that there have been half a million casualties in Afghanistan since 1979 and that much of the country is "a social catastrophe zone." Were the Soviets to increase their forces to a half-million men, the scale of the war would make past destruction look mild by comparison.

However, in June 1985, during the fourth round of U.N.-sponsored talks on Afghanistan, an important advance was made in drafting the document that could serve as the basis for a comprehensive settlement. Three out of four principal sections of the agreement—relating to noninterference in Afghan affairs, international guarantees and the return of the Afghan refugees—were resolved among the negotiating parties.

The fourth "instrument" is the last diplomatic element of the agreement to be settled. It deals with the linkage between the withdrawal of Soviet forces and Pakistan's agreement to restrain insurgent activity originating inside its borders. The terms are designed to allow both the withdrawal of Soviet military units and the repatriation of refugees under as near peaceful conditions as possible.

This instrument was expected to be resolved during the seventh round of talks in Geneva this May. Indeed, on May 4, the day before the talks opened, it was announced that Babrak Karmal had stepped down from the leadership of the P.D.P.A. Significantly, the Soviets made clear three years ago that once an agreement was imminent, they would

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initiate changes in Kabul that would enhance the prospects of a coalition regime emerging.

At this writing it seems probable that an agreement will be initialed in Geneva if the fourth instrument is settled. If the talks collapse, however, it will be because more powerful influences have been brought to bear by parties that have little to gain from a comprehensive peace settlement. In Southwest Asia the United States and the Soviet Union have advanced "forward policies" that have brought their military establishments into closer proximity in a region where for decades great-power conflicts had been mediated by buffer states. The military and intelligence establishments in the United States and the Soviet Union, to speak nothing of sister agencies in Pakistan and Afghanistan, have acquired huge budgetary allocations premised on current trends in the Afghan war and preparation for wider wars yet to take shape in the region. The negotiations can conclude successfully only if the prevailing momentum toward greater militarization, the fostering of garrison states and the extension of covert warfare is halted.

Nevertheless, other emerging factors favor an agreement. In Pakistan the Afghan negotiations have become a sensitive political issue, following local press revelations that in 1983 the United States appeared more interested in obstructing a negotiated settlement than in promoting one. Although it has received an unparalleled flow of American financial and military aid in return for its regional cooperation, the Pakistani military has kept a careful measure of its own circumstances. Its attitude has been to reap as many material benefits as it can from its support of American involvement in the Afghan war, without provoking the Soviet Union. The saturation point was clearly reached this year. The Soviets unequivocally warned Pakistan that they were prepared either to negotiate a withdrawal within the U.N. framework or to take measures against Pakistan that they had hitherto avoided. Cross-border bombing and small-scale sabotage inside the country increased. Faced with rising domestic opposition, Zia's regime got the message. Diplomacy experienced a rebirth.

There can be no utopian solution to the war in Afghanistan. It will end in an awkward compromise without any clear victories. The best hope is that both the stalemate and the carnage will end and that millions of refugees will be able to return to their villages in conditions of diminishing violence. When the Soviets intervened in Czechoslovakia in 1968 they justified their action by saying that Czech society would have reverted to capitalism had the socialist camp not intervened. There was, of course, no recognition that the Soviet model of socialism might itself have been at issue. In Afghanistan, Moscow argued that intervention was necessary to protect the "revolutionary process" and that the Soviet contingent had been invited in. Even if one leaves aside the fact that the man who allegedly would have issued the invitation never lived to attend the formal reception, another question must still be posed. When a "protector" is viewed as an occupying power rather than a liberator, the terms do not exist for any conceivable progressive alliance to emerge. Perhaps the point to be understood is that there can


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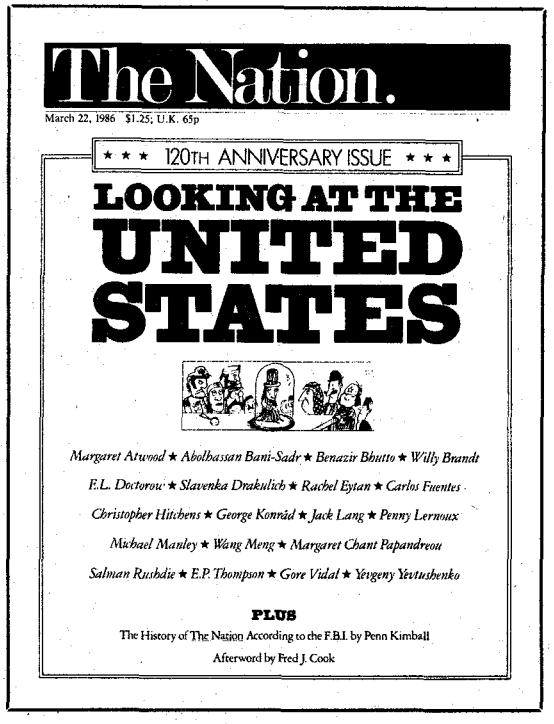
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be no revolutionary process that does not rest firmly on a popular base. The best that can be said of the Soviets in this instance is that Gorbachev has chosen not to make Brezhnev's Afghan war his own, and has consistently sought a diplomatic formula by which to withdraw Soviet forces. □

NURTURING LEAVES

# A Public Policy Of Private Caring

NADINE TAUB

On April 10 the House subcommittees on Civil Services and on Compensation and Employee Benefits heard testimony from Dr. Joann Urquhart, a cardiologist formerly with the National Institutes of Health. She told the representatives that in 1980 she returned to work only three weeks after her daughter's birth because she believed her supervisors would not give her the resources necessary to complete her research if she did not. She and other witnesses were there to support H.R. 4300, a bill pending before Congress that would protect the jobs of parents who take leaves for child care. "H.R. 4300 is crucial," Urquhart said, "because it establishes a norm for everyone so that it will not be held against those who choose to take parental leave."

Most people are not concerned, as Joann Urquhart was, with advancing their careers in highly competitive fields; for them, the question of guaranteed parental leave is a matter of economic security. As Lorraine Poole told four House subcommittees last fall during the first round of hearings on parental leave legislation, she could not adopt a child she desperately wanted because the City of Philadelphia refused to guarantee that she would have her job after taking the four-month leave required by the adoption agency.

The United States is unique among industrialized countries in having no law guaranteeing time off from work to care for a newborn child. At least seventy-five countries have provisions for leaves, with job protection and cash benefits. By contrast, according to a study by Catalyst, a New York City-based research outfit, only about half of large U.S. firms offer women even an unpaid child-care leave, and others report that a lower proportion of small companies do so. The number of men who have the option of taking a leave to care for a newborn is even less. Since virtually all fathers and more than 60 percent of all mothers now work outside the home in the United States, the issue touches millions of Americans, and support for parental leave is growing.

A blue-ribbon panel assembled by Yale University's Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy recently

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called for legislation requiring employers to provide a six-month leave of absence with at least partial pay for three months. The panel suggested that this leave—and a short-term disability leave which would allow mothers to recover from disabilities related to pregnancy and childbirth—be financed by employer-and-employee-funded insurance programs, as they are in other industrialized countries.

H.R. 4300, introduced on March 4, 1986, by Representative William Clay and known as the Parental and Medical Leave Act, is a more limited response to the demands for a national policy. Like the bill introduced last year by Representative Patricia Schroeder, H.R. 4300 would guarantee workers up to twenty-six weeks a year of unpaid temporary medical leave and eighteen weeks of parental leave every two years. Under both bills, parental leave can be taken to care for newborns, newly adopted children or children who are seriously ill or handicapped. Both versions also call for a commission to recommend, after no more than two years' study, legislation providing for paid leave. Clay's bill exempts firms with fewer than five employees, but it does provide for administrative and judicial enforcement.

The outlook for H.R. 4300 is favorable. It now has 87 co-sponsors, including 12 Republicans. Fifty-eight organizations, ranging from professional women's groups and unions to children's and religious groups, have endorsed it. The National Association of Manufacturers has remained silent, and only the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—with its 180,000 members—has come out against it. The bill should be out of committee by the end of June.

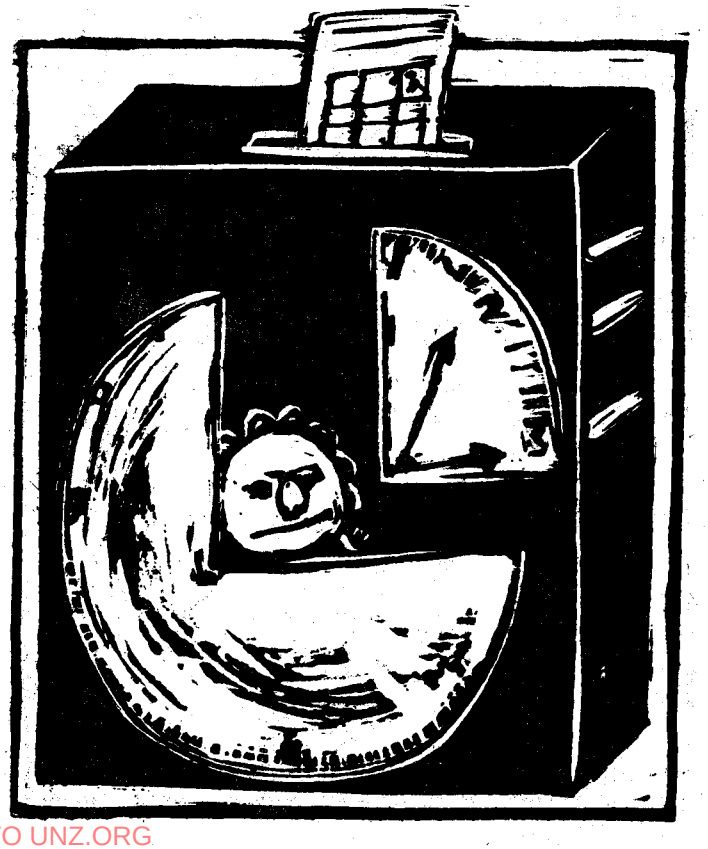
As a response to the needs of gainfully employed women, H.R. 4300 has several virtues. First, it is a vital step in helping parents of both sexes meet the demands of family and work. In this respect, it is an advance over the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 and other state and Federal anti-discrimination laws, which make no provision for child-care leaves and require employers to provide leaves for pregnancy-related disabilities only to the extent that they provide leaves for other types of disabilities. Second, in distinguishing child rearing from childbearing by separating medical leaves from parental leaves, H.R. 4300 clearly guarantees a father's right to child-care leave. Third, by treating pregnancy like any other temporary incapacity, the bill eliminates a source of resentment against workers who miss work because of it. This approach also makes it less likely that employers will refrain from hiring women of childbearing age on the assumption that it will cost them more in benefits. More generally, by encouraging both men and women to see the common elements in their reasons for being away from work, it may help diminish the stereotype that women are mothers first and workers second, which has tended to limit their opportunities.

H.R. 4300 has some serious shortcomings as well. Most low-income parents cannot afford to take unpaid leaves. Even when a family can do without one income, it will almost certainly be the wife who takes time off, no matter which parent most wants to care for the child, because women's salaries tend to be lower. A second problem is that legislators may see parental leave as a solution to the problem of child care. Thus the enactment of H.R. 4300 could jeopardize the chances for obtaining adequate day-care programs.

A third shortcoming of Clay's bill is that it covers only parental leave and says nothing about time off for the care of other relatives and dependents. Because the U.S. population is aging, far more old people than small children will need care in the years ahead. Current projections suggest that by 1990 there will be 19.2 million children under 5, as compared with 19.7 million people 65 and older on Medicare. By 2005 the number of older people needing health care could be more than twice the number of children under 5. As with child care, care for the elderly has been primarily the responsibility of women. In January the Travelers Corporation released a study showing that almost 30 percent of its employees—mostly female—care for elderly relatives or friends.

But making it possible for workers to look after family members other than children is not enough. The nuclear family is no longer the norm in society—if it ever was. The lower proportion of young people in the population; the rise in "nonfamily" households, many occupied by widows living alone; and the continually growing number of elderly people in the nonworking population, all make it less likely that adult children will be able to meet the needs of their aging parents or that a family member will be available to care for someone who is sick or disabled. In recognizing only family relationships legitimized by the state, these programs assume the presence of emotional ties that may not exist and ignore the possible emotional ties between people who are not legally related. Programs that cover only conventionally defined families are particularly hard on same-sex couples, who cannot marry, and on poor people, who often depend on the extended family.

While the importance of legislation to guarantee nurtur-



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ing leave is clear, devising such a program raises complex policy questions. What situations should be covered? How serious must the need be to warrant a leave? What adjustments in work schedules should be permitted—namely, leaves or shorter hours? Should the leaves be paid? Should compensation be based on the job left or the caring work done? What about pension credits and other benefits? How can programs be monitored with the least possible intrusion on privacy? What is the best way to finance the programs—employer funds, a payroll tax or general revenues? Should the state or Federal government foot the bill?

Agreeing on answers to those questions and implementing far-reaching reforms will be a long process. In the meantime, we might draw on current U.S. tax code provisions allowing deductions for the costs of dependent care. Under such a program, those caring for people who are physically or mentally incapable of looking after themselves or are under the age of fifteen would be permitted to adjust her or his work obligations. As in the U.S. tax code, eligible caregivers would include those living in the same household, not just the nuclear family and immediate relatives. To achieve the goal of integrating private-care obligations with paid employment, the program would include three forms of work adjustment: long-term leaves, short-term leaves and shorter work hours. A number of European countries provide helpful models. The Austrians allow one week, the Norwegians ten days and the French twelve days of paid leave for care of relatives. Shortened work-hour provisions could be modeled after the Swedish program of child-care leaves, which makes it possible for parents to take off blocks of half- or quarter-days.

Compensation should be based on the care performed rather than on the care-giver's job. A good starting point might be the salaries and benefits paid military medical and paramedical personnel, rather than the lower salaries of those in traditionally female caring occupations. No one is likely to argue that such figures are inflated, and drawing on a male tradition of public service helps endorse the value of caring work.

The time has come for us to move beyond a single-minded focus on the role of women as mothers of small children, to a broader discussion of the ways society can meet all the caring needs traditionally assigned to women. Our concern for gender equality requires it—and so does human decency. □

# Watergate

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

been a major financial backer of his *landsman* Spiro Agnew while Agnew was still governor of Maryland, and has been credited with a prime role in the selection of Agnew as Nixon's running mate. Friendly with both the Greek junta then in power and the CIA—"I have worked for the CIA anytime my help was requested," he once boasted—Pappas became virtually the official host for U.S. dignitaries visiting Athens in the early 1970s. He spent much of 1972 shuttling between Greece and the United States, helping to raise money for Nixon; and he himself contributed more than $100,000 before the April 7 deadline. Sometime during the winter of 1973, Dean says, [Mitchell's aide Frederick] LaRue told him to ask Pappas for $250,000–$300,000—as a *quid pro quo* for some import quotas Pappas needed to construct two crude-oil conversion plants in the United States or Canada. Both Mitchell and LaRue spoke with Pappas. On March 21 Dean told the President, "Pappas has agreed to come up with a single amount, I gather from Mitchell." (Later in the spring Nixon said, "Good old Tom is raising money. . . ." But Pappas insists he made no such contribution and there is no evidence that he did.)

Well, now there is evidence that he did. And that evidence, viewed in context, allows one to offer a general theory of the Watergate case. A Greek journalist named Elias P. Demetracopoulos, who is described in Central Intelligence Agency documents as "a scooper," and who was an active foe of the dictatorship in Athens, has been on this case for many years and has recently unearthed some unpublished material from the Watergate special prosecutor's office. These papers show that on February 2 and February 5, 1974, Pappas was interviewed, in the presence of his lawyer, John Doukas, by four members of the special prosecutor's team. One of these, Roger M. Witten, wrote a memorandum about the interviews, dated February 7, 1974. It states:

> Pappas met John and Martha Mitchell in their New York apartment after the election. Mitchell was watching the T.V., was upset, and was taking notes. Mrs. Mitchell was also very upset. Pappas stated that Mitchell did not ask him for funds or ask him to raise funds after the election.
>
> The interview was continued on February 5, with Ben-Veniste, Volner, Koeltl, Witten, Pappas and Doukas present. *Pappas stated that Mitchell asked him for a $50,000 loan in late 1972, which he gave to Mitchell.* Pappas further stated that he was asked about contributing to the defendants in a discussion where LaRue and others were present. [Emphasis added.]

"The defendants" are unmistakably identified in the remaining text as the Watergate burglary conspirators. The same set of documents from the special prosecutor's office shows:

§ That Pappas, an admitted "asset" of the C.I.A. and co-chair of the finance committee of the Committee to Re-Elect the President, solicited campaign contributions from corporations and individuals, including foreign nationals, in clear violation of U.S. law forbidding such donations.

§ That one of the foreign contributors was rewarded with a lucrative government contract. In return for a $15,000 donation to CREEP, and an additional contribution of between $10,000 and $12,500, a Greek businessman named Nicholas Vardinoyiannis was awarded the fueling contract for the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. The special prosecutor's memorandum speaks of six possible violations of American law in this instance alone.

§ That although he had broken the law, Pappas was not prosecuted. Among the grounds given by Witten for this leniency was Pappas's age. Yet in 1972 alone, Pappas flew to and from Greece no less than twenty-four times.

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In order to appreciate the extent of the "Greek connection," it is necessary to go back in time a little. The story begins on October 31, 1968, in the closing stages of the presidential campaign that first brought Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew to power. On that day, Democratic national chair Lawrence O'Brien called on Nixon and Agnew to explain their relationship with Pappas. He pointed to Pappas's role as "a key Republican fund-raiser, go-between for Nixon and Agnew, and an unofficial representative of the Greek junta." O'Brien's statement, which was issued from the Watergate headquarters of the Democratic National Committee, ended with the words, "I think that both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Agnew should explain their relationships with him [Pappas], and let the American people know what's going on."

It has since been established that O'Brien was more right than he knew. In secret testimony before the House Intelligence Committee in 1976, Henry Tasca, Nixon's Ambassador to Greece in the years of the fascist dictatorship, confirmed that in 1968 money from that dictatorship was funneled to the Nixon-Agnew election campaign. The source of the money was Michael Roufogalis. Roufogalis, now serving a life sentence in Athens for high treason and for his part in the murder of dissidents under the junta, was then the strongman of the Greek C.I.A. Known and feared under the acronym K.Y.P., this agency was founded and heavily subsidized by Langley, Virginia. The conduit for the money was—Thomas A. Pappas.

In other words, the Nixon camp had a dirty and dangerous secret, guarded by a few intimates, that dated back to 1968. A C.I.A. asset was recycling C.I.A. money from a particularly repulsive foreign dictatorship that wanted to influence an American presidential election. It seems fair to speculate that O'Brien's call for more information alarmed the President's men.

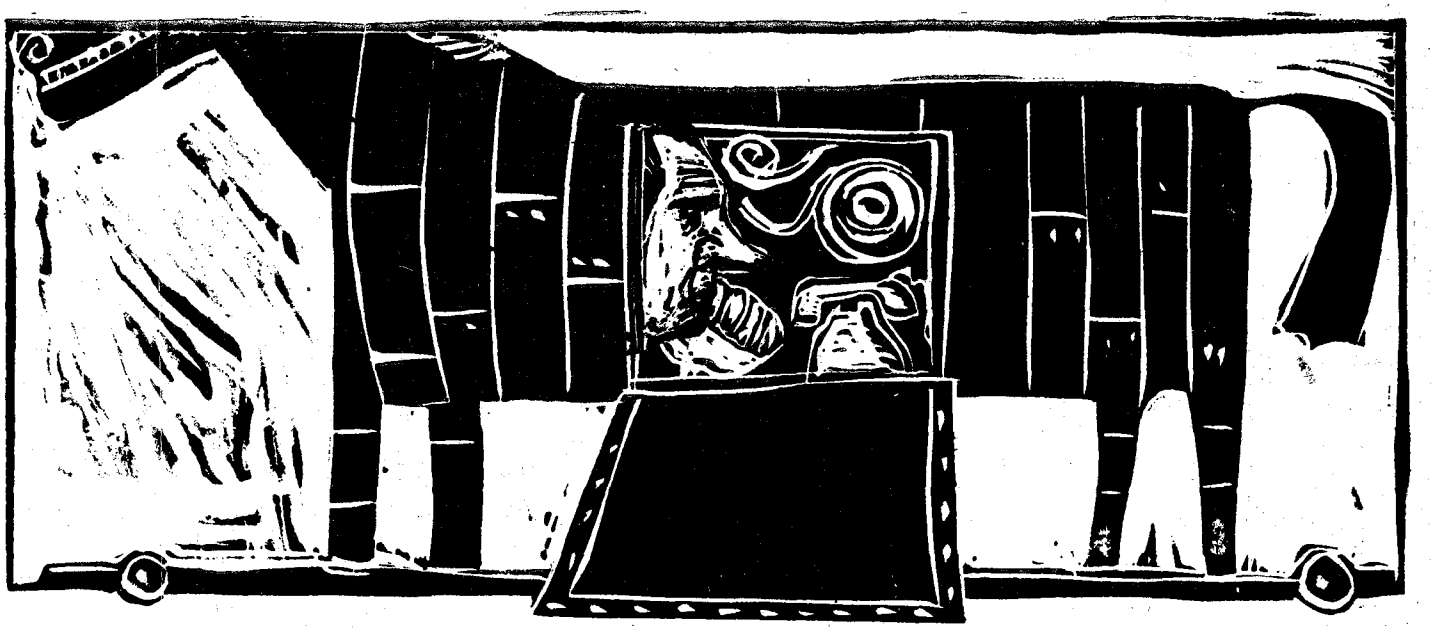
We do not know the exact sum the Greek dictators gave to the Nixon campaign. We do know that they got their money's worth. On September 27, 1968, forty-eight hours before the Athens junta was to hold a phony plebiscite legitimizing its rule, Spiro Agnew held a press conference at which he reversed his declared "neutrality" on the issue and praised the dictators for moving toward democracy. During the subsequent Nixon-Agnew years the junta moved even further from democracy and was flooded with aid and good will from Washington.

O'Brien's call for clarification of the Pappas connection might have been a shot in the dark, or it might not. It became urgent for the President's men to find out what O'Brien knew, and simultaneously to block any further avenue of inquiry. This is where Demetracopoulos enters the story. It was he who first gave evidence to O'Brien, and it was he who kept up the campaign to ventilate the issue. In July 1971 he was invited to testify about Pappas before Representative Ben Rosenthal's Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe.

Recent successful Freedom of Information Act lawsuits by Demetracopoulos against the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the C.I.A. (which culminated on April 16 of this year with the C.I.A.'s admission that it possessed "no derogatory information" about him) elicited documents showing that he was under extremely heavy surveillance during this period. A letter signed by F.B.I. Director William Webster to Representative Don Edwards admits that "rather extensive" surveillance of Demetracopoulos was conducted between November 9, 1967, and October 2, 1969; between August 25, 1971, and March 14, 1973; and between February 19, 1974, and October 24, 1974.

Demetracopoulos did not know he was being invigilated, but he did know that he was drawing unwelcome attention because of his efforts to highlight the Pappas connection. On September 7, 1971, Nixon's henchman and confidante Murray Chotiner told him bluntly over lunch at the fashionable Jockey Club: "Lay off Pappas. You can be in trouble. You can be deported. It's not smart politics. You know Tom Pappas is a friend of the President." On October 27, 1971, lunching with Robert Novak at the Sans Souci restaurant, Demetracopoulos was threatened by Pappas himself, who came over from an adjacent table to tell him, and Novak, that he knew their employers and had sufficient pull to make life hard for those who wanted him investigated.

These were pinpricks compared with the barrage unleashed



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by Attorney General Mitchell. My witness here is Louise Gore, who has a fair claim to be considered an unimpeachable source. She was a key member of the Republican establishment in Maryland, a State Senator and one of those most responsible for getting Spiro Agnew the governorship. (It was also she who introduced him to Nixon.) She was a close friend of John and Martha Mitchell and, at the time of which I am writing, had returned to Washington while still Richard Nixon's representative to Unesco. On January 24, 1972, she sent a handwritten letter to Demetracopoulos, of which I possess a copy. It reads:

> Dear Elias—
> I went to Perle's [Perle Mesta's] luncheon for Martha Mitchell yesterday and sat next to John. He is *furious* at you—and your testimony against Pappas. He kept threatening to have you deported!!
>
> At first I tried to ask him if he had any reason to think you could be deported and he didn't have any answer—But then tried to counter by asking me what I knew about you and why we were friends.
>
> It really got out of hand. It was all he'd talk about during lunch and everyone at the table was listening. . . .

At the table were George Bush, then ambassador to the U.N., Hubert Humphrey's sister Frances Humphrey Howard, J. Willard Marriott and numerous other diplomats and luminaries. In front of these people the Attorney General of the United States conceived it as his responsibility to make threats against a dissident for questioning the probity of the President's bagman. Demetracopoulos, ignoring Chotiner's warning, submitted the requested memorandum to Representative Rosenthal's subcommittee on September 17, 1971. He closed his testimony with these words: "Finally, I have submitted separately to the subcommittee items of documentary evidence which I believe will be useful." Those words, which were printed in the record of the hearing, caused what Rowland Evans and Robert Novak described as "extreme nervousness in the Nixon White House."

Why did they have that effect? The Nixonites had every reason to fear disclosure of their corrupt practice of taking money from the Greek junta for the 1968 campaign. What was their reaction? To try to debauch the 1972 campaign as well. On June 17, 1972, five months after his vulgar public outburst against Demetracopoulos at Perle Mesta's, John Mitchell ordered the burglars into the Watergate building.

Now, the uniqueness of the Pappas connection lies in the fact that it occurs in 1968, in 1972 and in the subsequent cover-up. Indeed, White House sensitivity to the mention of Pappas's name seems to have intensified at the same tempo as the Watergate investigation. A transcript of the Nixon tapes for April 26, 1973, which was not disclosed until 1977 by *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong, indicates the President was seriously worried. He feared that in his upcoming testimony to Congress, John Dean might recall Nixon's earlier admission that Pappas had raised "hush money" for the burglars. In six hours of foul-mouthed shoptalk with his chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, Nixon brought up Pappas seven times. At one point the leader of the free world fretted, "I think it's a matter of fact though that somebody said be sure to talk to Pappas because he's being very helpful on the, uh, Watergate thing."

Dean's memory was as good as Nixon had feared, or nearly so. On June 27, 1973, he appeared before the Senate Watergate Committee and said, under questioning from Senator Edward Gurney:

> There was at one point in time, after Mr. Moore [Richard A. Moore, a White House assistant] had been to visit with Mr. Mitchell in New York, following the La Costa meeting, an effort to have Mr. LaRue go out and raise money. This had been discussed earlier and Mr. LaRue had done some activities of this nature. Mr. [John] Ehrlichman [domestic affairs adviser to Nixon] mentioned to me the fact that someone ought to go to Mr. Pappas, who was a long-time supporter of the President, and see if he would be of any assistance. Apparently, Mr. LaRue and Mr. Pappas had had some business dealings and as a result of those business dealings, Mr. LaRue was encouraged that something might be able to be done. But he told me that Mr. Pappas might want to have some favorable considerations from the government on some oil matters that resulted from this mutual venture they were in.

The "La Costa meeting" refers to a gathering at Haldeman's California villa in February 1973. At that meeting Ehrlichman asked what Dean, with his usual gift for phrase, called the "bottom-line" question: "Would the seven defendants remain silent through the Senate hearings?" The question was by no means an idle one. As Lukas puts it, "They all agreed that the strategy depended on continued silence, but Dean reported that the defendants were making new demands for hush money." Lukas also reports:

> One of those LaRue spoke with about the unidentified "White House project" was Carl H. Lindner, board chairman of the American Financial Corporation and chairman of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. Lindner was willing to contribute $50,000–$100,000 but wanted to know what he was giving for. LaRue consulted Mitchell, who said they obviously couldn't tell him what it was for. So that source too was abandoned.

Precisely. One merit of the Pappas hypothesis is that nobody had to explain to him what the money was for. Pappas already knew about the 1968 fascist slush fund; already knew that the connection was in danger of exposure; already knew what the burglars had been after. Thus Mitchell went to him for the money.

John Dean, like Lawrence O'Brien, was smarter than he himself realized. There were indeed "oil matters" and "favorable considerations" at stake, involving Nicholas Vardinoyiannis, the Sixth Fleet payoff contract and the funds for CREEP from unauthorized foreigners. But they constituted, to borrow Nixon-Kissinger argot, a sideshow to the real Greek connection—the funneling of junta money through Pappas. And the concentration on sideshow aspects of the matter allowed Pappas to appear before a Watergate grand jury and deny that he had ever given money for the cover-up. That was perjury, as the special prosecutor's documents show. February 1974, when Federal prosecutors questioned Pappas, after all, was several

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months before Nixon's abject resignation. How did the Pappas connection go undetected?

There were three attempts by Congressional committees to probe Pappas's activities. They did, as Seymour Hersh puts it in *The Price of Power*, "raise the question of whether the CIA . . . was aware that some of its funds were being returned to the United States for use in the presidential election." All three Congressional inquiries were terminated. Here is what happened to each.

The first was launched by Representative Wright Patman, a grizzled and combative veteran from Texas, who chaired the House Banking Committee. Within five days of the Watergate break-in, his staff had traced the numbered $100 bills found on the burglars through Mexico, and all the way back to Maurice Stans and CREEP. Patman prepared a subpoena list, causing Richard Nixon to start talking out of the side of his mouth again. "The game has to be played awfully rough," said the President at a meeting in the Oval office with Haldeman and Dean on September 15, 1972. "Tell Ehrlichman to get [Banking Committee member Garry] Brown in and [Gerald] Ford in, and then they can all work out something. But they ought to get off their asses and push it. No use to let Patman have a free ride here."

Political pressure was indeed brought to bear on Patman, through House minority leader (and future Watergate beneficiary) Gerald Ford. But ordinary political muscle was not thought sufficient. The F.B.I. was instructed to "leak" poisonous information about Elias Demetracopoulos to members of the committee. That information, since admitted by the Bureau to have been false and defamatory, accused him of being a dangerous Communist. It also suggested that he had arranged a Wall Street speaking engagement for Patman at a fee of $1,500. Shown "in confidence" to committee members, this concatenation of falsehoods had the desired effect. Six Democrats joined the Republicans in voting to deny Patman subpoena powers. John Dean recalled later that "another sigh of relief was made at the White House that we had leaped one more hurdle in the continuing cover-up." (On May 6 of this year, the F.B.I. released documents to Demetracopoulos which show that "upon closer examination" the fee paid to Patman "proved perfectly appropriate." Too late. The same papers show twelve "general indices at [F.B.I.] New York office regarding Wright Patman." After each of these appears the single word "destroyed.")

In ordering the collection of slanderous information about Demetracopoulos, the State Department had urged that "the Department of Justice do everything possible to see if we can make a Foreign Agent's case, or any kind of a case for that matter." At whose request was this catchall pseudo-investigation launched? None other than Henry Tasca's, Nixon's loyal Ambassador to the Greek junta and a close personal friend of Tom Pappas, who knew the dirty secret about the dirty money of 1968. In July 1971, a few days after Demetracopoulos had testified before Representative Ben Rosenthal's committee, Tasca sent a four-page secret cable from Athens urging that "a way will be found to step up investigation of Demetracopoulos." The cable was addressed in the ordinary way to William Rogers at State but also, and most unusually, to Attorney General John Mitchell.

The second investigation was sidetracked in a manner that was scarcely less ignominious. Under the chairmanship of Frank Church, the Senate began an inquiry into the abuse of the democratic process by its alleged guardians in the C.I.A. There was every reason to ask whether the agency had violated its own charter forbidding domestic political operations, since all of the Watergate burglars were connected with the C.I.A. But, as Seymour Hersh also says in his study of the matter:

> This question [the Greek connection] was not looked into by the Senate Intelligence Committee during its CIA inquiries in 1975 and 1976. Sources close to the committee have said that its investigation was abruptly canceled at Kissinger's direct request.

Thus, the intervention in American internal affairs by foreign despots, themselves closely tied to the C.I.A., was thought too sensitive by a Senate committee appointed to consider such abuses.

The third investigation was prompted by George McGovern. He suspected the Greek connection from the start and, on October 29, 1976, asked Daniel Inouye, then chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, to investigate it. By McGovern's account, Elias Demetracopoulos

> incurred the animosity of both the Greek and American governments. In Washington, he was threatened with deportation by Attorney General John Mitchell, denounced in an anonymous State Department memorandum, his Wall Street employers were visited by FBI agents, the congressional committee before which he testified was visited by a Justice Department agent, and slanderous raw material and disinformation about Demetracopoulos was given to reporters and free lance writers like Russell Howe and Sarah Trott.

McGovern added in a follow-up letter to Inouye dated June 7, 1977:

> It is also pertinent to note that in the material I supplied to you last October twenty-ninth there were intimations from a number of high officials, including Secretary of State Kissinger and former CIA Director William Colby, that the Agency's relationship with the Greek junta was such that if it were brought to light, that Administration's relations with the restored democratic government in Greece could be damaged.

Those in Washington who had hoped for such an outcome were to be disappointed. Inouye ceased to be chair of the intelligence committee at the end of 1977, and subsequent hearings during the tenure of Birch Bayh were prevented from calling C.I.A. witnesses by vice chair and later chair Barry Goldwater. In the words of one of his subordinates (the only name in this story I keep confidential), "Goldwater deep-sixed the Pappas investigation."

In October 1963, an interview with Goldwater was published in the *Athens Daily Post*. The interviewer was Elias Demetracopoulos. In the midst of a call for more private capital in Greece, Goldwater said:

> The recently signed agreement between Tom Pappas of Boston and the Greek government for the investment of U.S.

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> private capital of $160 million in Greece is an important beginning in this direction. I know Tom Pappas very well. He is one of my closest friends.

This distinguished friendship, which a new and more cynical world has learned to call conflict of interest, did not restrain Senator Goldwater from crushing the Pappas inquiry, nor impel him to reiterate his long and deep comradeship with its subject. Not to waste words, the Inouye probe into the Pappas question was unceremoniously flushed down the memory hole, where it joined its two promising predecessors.

Why not, just for once, take Gordon Liddy's word for it? He said that the purpose of the break-in was "to find out what O'Brien had of a derogatory nature about *us*, not for us to get something on *him* or the Democrats."

I know there are other hypotheses about the motive for the break-in. The most plausible, advanced by Michael Drosnin in *Citizen Hughes*, is that Nixon wanted to know what the Democrats knew about Howard Hughes and his payoffs. But Hughes was also paying off the Democrats, and there is no evidence that they ever planned to make a campaign issue out of him. To summarize the reasons why Nixon, Mitchell and Kissinger went into orbit at the very mention of Pappas's name:

§ Pappas, exploiting C.I.A. connections, was the bagman for an illegal and shameful transfusion of campaign money in 1968.

§ The Congressional investigation of this deed was edging closer to the truth in early 1972.

§ That investigation was opposed at every step, by means legal and illegal, by Nixon and Mitchell. The American Ambassador to Greece, a friend of Pappas and a man who knew the guilty 1968 secret, took a hand in this wrecking operation.

§ All of the burglars had C.I.A. connections, which may explain how they knew what to look for and why they kept silent.

§ Pappas provided the only money we know about to John Mitchell for the burglars' hush money.

§ All three subsequent House and Senate probes into the Pappas connection were sidetracked by men with either C.I.A. loyalties or connections to Tom Pappas, or both.

It's been fourteen years. It would be nice to say that there have been seven fat and seven lean ones. But here we are in 1986, and it is Nixon who has waxed fat, Kissinger who has waxed fat, Goldwater who has waxed fat. Those who modestly raised the banner of a discreet McGovern liberalism have seen history rewritten, and their own cherished ideals defamed as anti-American, by the heirs of a ghastly crook. As I write, *Newsweek* has a gloating cover story on Nixon, with the brainless headline, "He's Back." That pushover Governor Cuomo says of Tricky Dicky that he is "a man of great intellect, unique experience and extraordinary political wisdom." Fill in the rest for yourself. But before you do so, be sure that you can answer the following questions:

§ Why was Thomas Pappas not prosecuted for his violations of U.S. law?

§ Why was John Mitchell never asked about his soliciting of $50,000 from a man who was known to work both for the C.I.A. and for a foreign dictatorship, and who at the time was in breach of laws that Mitchell had taken his oath to uphold?

§ Why was the Senate Watergate Committee never informed of the Pappas-Mitchell transaction uncovered by the special prosecutor?

§ Did Henry Kissinger, who chaired the 40 Committee which oversaw covert action and whose members included John Mitchell (the first Attorney General to serve as a 40 Committee member), know of this evidence when he killed the Church committee's probe?

§ Did Barry Goldwater, a "close" friend of Pappas, know of this evidence when he dropped Senator Inouye's later inquiry?

If those questions could be answered candidly, then bygones could be bygones. But there isn't even a conspiracy of silence about such questions. Rather, we have a conspiracy of nervous and sickly applause. The fact remains that a popular Republican Administration succeeded in subverting the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, that it got away with it without ever taking the witness stand and that the corrupt alliance with a foreign dictatorship was a crucial ingredient. Maybe that reminds you of something and maybe it doesn't, but there is still no legal obstacle to ex-convict John Mitchell stepping into the witness box and telling, at last, why he drummed up that fifty grand. □

## EVENING, WITH LEAVES

*The Hague*

From Dutch rooftops, pigeons in summer rut
are burbling of lust, and a cat
crouched on the toolshed is looking up
through overhanging branches with yellow eyes
at the blackbird defending its territory
(if that's what birdsong is), with a whistling
that for me wins the prize from nightingales.

In the enclosed back garden every bush and tree,
loaded with leaf and flower, responds
in its individual way to a fresh wind
that brings a smell of cows from the polders
and shakes the golden raintree blossoms
into uncut grass with its own crop
of new seed, silver in twilight.

Aphids swarm on the dahlias,
drinking a sticky sap
and I lurch with a groan
out of canvas sling chair
to hose them off, idly rubbing
leaf ribs and crisp tips clean,
soaking my sneakers,

then play the spray on the sagging fence,
to wet down the darkening compost heap,
as the last boat gives three honks from the harbor,
leaving for Norwich.

***Edward Field***

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## Atwood Woman

CATHARINE R. STIMPSON

THE HANDMAID'S TALE. *By Margaret Atwood. Houghton Mifflin. 311 pp. $16.95.*

Politics, Margaret Atwood once said, means "who is entitled to do what to whom, with impunity; who profits by it; and who therefore eats what." *The Handmaid's Tale* proves that Atwood is among the most telling political writers in the West today. Simply put, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a feminist dystopia. Atwood transmogrifies the Cambridge, Massachusetts, of the late twentieth century into the capital of a monotheocracy, the Republic of Gilead, a nasty piece of work. Its fundamentalist founders have pulled off a bloody coup d'état. They have replaced the Constitution with the overweening patriarchal principles of Genesis. Gilead expels Jews and blacks. It compels rigid gender roles. White women have no money, education or civil rights. However, ladies of the elite get to lord it over the household. They decide who watches what on television.

Like all dystopias, *The Handmaid's Tale* is about a future. However, Atwood, famously a Canadian writer, is also returning to her American past. She acknowledges that history in her dedication—to Mary Webster, a rebellious colonial American ancestor, and to Perry Miller, the professor who taught her how to read national literatures when she was a graduate student at Harvard University in the early 1960s. Webster and Miller embody the best of the American past, while the Puritans, who longed for a "theocratic Utopia," embody the worst. Their city upon a hill provides the moral and psychological blueprints for a Gilead—for the defeat of a Mary Webster, a Perry Miller or their descendant, a Margaret Atwood.

Like many modern totalitarians, Gilead's patriarchs, the Commanders, mix the technology of computers and TV with older forms of social control. They wage war beyond their borders and impose strict order within. They flay the feet of spiritual bastards with steel cables. They hang the dead bodies of heretics and traitors, of abortionists and gays, from hooks in the outer wall of what was once Harvard Yard. Yet Gilead offers its obedient citizens some diversions. The Eyes, the secret police, carouse in Memorial Hall, where William James once lectured. Good women attend public executions and dismemberments in front of Widener Library. Commanders and affluent male foreigners have hard liquor and hardened prostitutes in their private club.

Due to disease and pollution, many of the men of Gilead are sterile, the women barren and the children mostly wretched mutants. Inevitably, Gilead is ferociously pro-natalist. Into each Commander's home a fertile "handmaid" must fall, dressed in heavy red robes, her ankle tattooed. Atwood has a gift for the astringently grotesque image and event. Commanders, wives and handmaids endure "the ceremony": As the handmaid lies between the wife's legs, the Commander tries to impregnate her. If he succeeds, a red Birthmobile will pick up all the handmaids nine months later and deliver them to the virile Commander's house, so that they can roll about and shriek in the rites of birth.

Atwood's narrator, Offred, is such a handmaid. Before Gilead's revolution, she was an ordinary sensual woman, with a college degree, a husband, a daughter, a job in a library. The family tried in vain to escape to Canada. Her husband was shot; her child taken and given to a Commander's family. Because she is still young, Offred can "choose" re-education at the Rachel and Leah Center and take up her shaky career as a handmaid.

The name "Offred" signifies that she is the possession "of Fred," her Commander of the moment. A market researcher and packager of ideology, Fred has been the revolution's Michael Deaver. Serena Joy, his wife, has been a songstress star of Christian broadcasting. Forced to obey both, Offred becomes involved in two dangerous affairs. One is with the Commander himself. He wants to play Scrabble, kiss her on the lips, read tabooed issues of *Vogue* and *Ms.*, and dress her in a prerevolutionary tart's costume. The second relationship, arranged by Serena Joy, is with Nick, a chauffeur and a member of both the secret police and the underground. However, "Offred" also means "off-red" and although Offred lacks the courage of her mother, a feminist, or of Moira, her lesbian friend, she wants to resist, to take off her red clothing.

A superb storyteller, Atwood riskily interweaves the narrative threads of the protest novel, the psychological novel and the bedroom farce. Offred's tale is a scholarly reconstruction, assembled some two centuries later from tapes she dictated while living in a safe house in Bangor, Maine. History fails to record whether she ever reached freedom in Canada or England. Her stone in the graveyard of time is but half-inscribed.

Born in 1939, the formidable Atwood has now published more than twenty books: criticism, anthologies, stories, poems, six novels. Ten years ago, reviewing Marge Piercy's utopia, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Atwood compared reading that novel to reading Piercy's poetry. She called the experience a turn from "an imagined world to an imagination, from a sense to a sensibility." The same may be true of Atwood's work. Although her novels are more finely attuned to natural and visionary realms than are those of Piercy, they too are imagined worlds. They share a geography, or, to steal from Annette Kolodny, a languagescape.

The central figure in Atwood's territory is a woman. Atwood Woman is young, educated, white, middle class, invariably heterosexual. She has a job—as an illustrator, scientist, journalist. She has had her share of sexual experience. Her men are often weaker than she. She is urban, but the wilderness is usually the site of her most profound moral and psychological education. In flight from her day-to-day life, she discovers the meaning of survival, a key word in Atwood's vocabulary. She is Marian in Atwood's comedy of manners, *The Edible Woman*; the nameless narrator in the quest novel, *Surfacing*; Joan, the Gothic fraud, in that wonderful romp, *Lady Oracle*; Lesje and Elizabeth in the somber chamber piece, *Life Before Man*; Rennie in a second quest novel, set in

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the Caribbean rather than in Canada, *Bodily Harm*. Now she is Offred.

Flanking Atwood Woman are two other sorts of women, both of whom influence her. One is her contemporary, often more raucous or audacious than she. The second sort of woman is older. She is Atwood Woman's landlady, employer, aunt, mother, neighbor. Reactionary and manipulative, she strips the world of sensuality and spontaneity. Terrified of the naked, she nevertheless denudes her environment. Her ideals are decency, respectability. Acting on them, she commits moral indecency after moral indecency. She enjoys watching the wormings and turnings of another's submission. Frequently these toughies, in their hats, gloves and woolen underwear, represent provincial Anglo-Canadian society. In *Bodily Harm*, Rennie says sardonically of Griswold, Ontario, her hometown: "In Griswold everyone gets what they deserve. In Griswold everyone deserves the worst."

Gilead is Griswold gone wild. The Aunts, who pump iron (but never irony) into the body politic of technological Calvinism, represent Atwood's most disdainful depiction of the petty female boss. Wearing electric cattle prods on leather belts, they control, reward and punish other women. Like certain of Brecht's characters, they are at once sinister and funny. Atwood achieves a triple effect—she makes her dystopic state even more frightening because it issues cattle prods to such ordinary figures. Yet she also manages to domesticate totalitarianism, because she shows it peopled by such ordinary figures. The state becomes even more frightening, because its monstrosity seems normally absurd, absurdly normal. Finally, Atwood reminds her reader of the political function of satire: to weaken the grip of the cruel and foolish by sending them up witless.

In one of her most original maneuvers, Atwood links the morality of the Aunts to that of radical feminists. The Aunts are repressive. Radical feminists can be repressive too. In the active syllogism of power, the premises of repression lead to conclusions of oppression.

This association of Gilead's policewomen with some radical feminist sects reveals Atwood's boldness and her political vision. Since the 1960s she has exposed two patterns of domination: of men over women, and of the United States over the North American conti-


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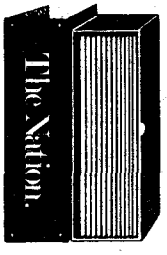


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nent. Her Canada is a colony in which England has been replaced by the United States. *Surfacing* eloquently and adroitly mapped (another key word in Atwood's vocabulary) the ways in which those two patterns of economic, cultural and psychological abuse reinforce and double back on each other.

Atwood has explored the process through which the powerless come to resist their masters, create alternative identities and arrive at self-mastery. *Survival* (her brilliant analysis of Canadian literature) and *Surfacing*, both written in the early 1970s, are companion texts about a victim's repudiation of the victim's role. One of the most famous passages in *Surfacing* is the narrator's declaration: "This above all, to refuse to be a victim. Unless I can do that I can do nothing." Women's collective repudiation is feminism; a colony's is nationalism.

Atwood is careful to discriminate between freedom and psychological atomism; between self-mastery and mastery over others. Since the mid-1970s she has become increasingly skeptical of the appetite for domination. Modifying her nationalism, she is now suspicious of the patriarchal state. The colonized Canada of *Surfacing* has become a wimpish political actor, at once philanthropic and timorous. Fugitives from Gilead escape to the north, but the Canadian government periodically rounds them up for return to the muscular nation to the south.

The figure of the torturer now fires Atwood's anger and contempt. She spurns the distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian states—both torture. The "symbolic cannibalism" of *The Edible Woman* has become the far more violent and bloody cannibalism of the electrode and the fist. In 1981, in a lecture titled "Canadian-American Relations," Atwood codified the politics of *Bodily Harm* and *The Handmaid's Tale*:

> The world is rapidly abandoning the nineteenth-century division into capitalist and socialist. The new camps are those countries that perform or tolerate political repression, torture and mass murder and those that do not. Terrorism of the hijacking and assassination variety is now international; so is the kind practiced by governments against their own citizens. The most important field of study at the moment is . . . human aggression.

*The Handmaid's Tale* asks the question that is at the heart of morality: "How can the tortured forgive the torturer? The prisoner the jailor? The mother the kidnapper and killer of her child?"

As Atwood's politics have deepened, her ideas about language have altered. Her writing still has the energy and clarity of a swift river. It is limpid without being limp; clever without being silly; controlled without being stilted; precise without being pedantic. She is a rhetorical marvel. In 1975, praising Adrienne Rich, Atwood might have been describing her own style: "mercilessness, of a desirable kind. . . . Language is honed down, decoration trimmed off." She is equally capable of showing the shore of a northern wilderness lake, its fronds and waves and rootlets, and of skewering a frivolity or booby. In *Life Before Man* an Atwood Woman, Elizabeth, goes to bed with William. His devotion to the environment does not redeem his dull devotion to himself. The experience is "like sleeping with a large and fairly active slab of Philadelphia cream cheese."

Paradoxically, like Rich, Atwood also distrusts language. In part she pays an obligatory homage to the weary modern awareness of the gaps between the word and the thing; sign and meaning; culture and nature. Welcoming the death of syntax, Atwood is also paying the now equally obligatory homage to a distrustful postmodern awareness of the ability of the powerful to control discourse. The surprising end of *The Handmaid's Tale* is a parody of academic style. Atwood invents the partial transcript of the Twelfth Symposium on Gileadean Studies, in June 2195. The transcript contains the major paper about the handmaid's tale which reassures us that Gilead has fallen. However, the transcript does nothing to dispel the fear that pompous, sniggering academics will still be labeling reality in centuries to come.

Yet, Atwood's politics demand that the writer use language to say who is doing what to whom, with impunity. In "Notes Towards a Poem That Can Never Be Written," Atwood insists that the writer see "clearly and without flinching"; that the writer bear "witness." She must speak for the woman "on the wet cement floor" who herself is "silent and fingerless." That woman's death must become another woman's syntax. Atwood's most recent characters accept that burden. In *Bodily Harm*, Rennie returns to Canada to report on the vileness she has seen on the Caribbean island to which she had fled for a holiday. In

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*The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred talks into her tape recorder, to an unknown audience. Of course, her story is not true. It is, though, imaginatively plausible. For Atwood, no one can ignore that plausibility with impunity. □

# Trilling Man

MARK SHECHNER

LIONEL TRILLING AND THE FATE OF CULTURAL CRITICISM. *By Mark Krupnick. Northwestern University Press. 207 pp. $21.95. Paper $10.95.*

*As Charles Peguy said, "Tout commence en mystique et finit en politique"—everything begins in sentiment and assumption and finds its issue in political action and institutions. The converse is also true: just as sentiments become ideas, ideas eventually establish themselves as sentiments.*

*—Lionel Trilling,*
The Liberal Imagination

In Trilling's case the converse became the rule: *Tout commence en politique et finit en mystique.* No intellectual of his generation was fonder of mystique than Trilling, one more guarded, cryptic and oracular. His prose was sinuous and elliptical, inting at reasons beyond expression nd disclosing a mind ever attentive to ıe ballet of ideas—indeed, to its own liés and pirouettes. As Mark Krupnick ıows, the favored choreography was one f balances and antitheses, of carefully rawn tensions and unresolved dialectics. ong before deconstruction became a ashion in the academy, Trilling was racticing it on himself, defending seemıgly contradictory positions from one ssay to the next and suggesting a turn f mind that Krupnick characterizes as aving been allergic to closure.

It should come as no surprise, then, ıat of all the New York intellectuals, rilling has received the most critical at-ntion. Krupnick's book is the third udy of the man since his death, in 975. The most productive of the New ork intellectuals, the most scholarly, ıe most challenging and elusive, he was nique in his set for having a Ph.D. and eing a teacher by profession, rather ıan by expediency. He was not a *Luftmensch* who had fallen on his feet in the Ivy League but a *bourgeois gentilhomme* and a literary scholar who had kept fast company in his youth. In other words, Trilling was a man of parts, and the complexity of the picture is a portion of the mystique.

That mystique has exercised a fascination for young intellectuals schooled in the aesthetics of the difficult and trained to appreciate a modern self that, like a modern text, is intricate and demanding. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Trilling refused to be understood too quickly. Of his life we know little; he guarded his privacy with care, though in point of adventure or scandal or political engagement there would appear to be little to know. After a flurry of radical activism in the early 1930s he seems to have led a cloistered life. The intricate self he set out to create was entirely a mental construction, a clockwork of reflexes that in his later years needed little in the way of social stimulation to keep its intricate mechanisms in gear.

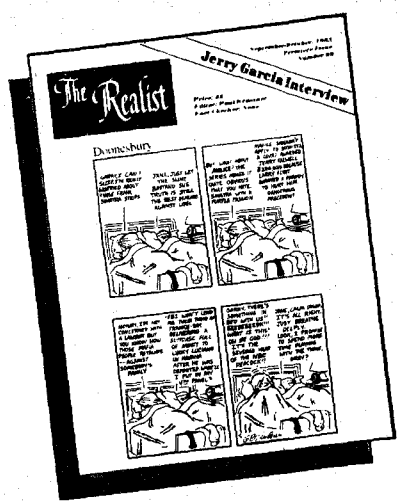
His sense of himself as a divided creature began early, in the double life he lived in the 1930s as an English instructor at Columbia College and a restless young man of the left. As Krupnick observes:

> Inevitably that sense of his role [as a Columbia humanist] was at odds with his self-identification as a New York intellectual. As a *Partisan Review* writer, Trilling was committed to opposition to the established order; as a humanist at Columbia, he participated in a project of acculturation.

It was from the discrepancies between intellectual and professor, Village Marxist and acolyte of Morningside Heights, lukewarm Jew and passionate Anglophile, that he formed his basic identity: the opposing self, the thinker at odds with his own thought, the Hegelian dialectician in search of a fresh synthesis. For all the richness and variety of his work, Trilling was at bottom a bilateral thinker who saw life through its polarities—will and idea, energy and inertia, eros and death, sincerity and authenticity.

The dialectical imagination reflected

*lark Shechner's book,* After the evolution: Studies in the Contemporary Jewish Imagination, *will be ublished by Indiana University Press ext year.*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his youthful apprenticeship in Marxism. The *Menorah Journal*, in which Trilling began his writing career in 1925, was a crucible of leftism, and many of its inner circle in the 1930s—Herbert Solow and George Novack in particular—would be drawn deep into the Trotskyist orbit. Trilling himself drew back from revolutionary Marxism early; by 1935, his future as a scholar and professor in view, he spun away from the revolutionary course and set himself on the more traditional path of humanism. Krupnick tells us that Trilling's dissertation on Matthew Arnold, published in 1939, was conceived as a rigorously Marxist tract on Arnold's intellectual development, stressing "development by contradiction, triadic progression by phases, the necessarily progressive character of such change, and the centrality of class struggle." As the project took shape, however, the dialectics were downplayed in favor of a more organic and humanistic conception of Arnold.

The habit of dialectical thought stayed with Trilling, however, and the practice of seeing the world in terms of contradiction and struggle survived the material bias of Marxism. No longer a dialectics of historical change, the habit of thought became a fetish of oppositions, which explains why even as a young critic, in the heat of political passion, Trilling was developing a "taste for stasis" and equilibrium. If that made for a certain dramatic tension and refreshing unpredictability in Trilling's writing, it also fostered routines of equivocation, the most notorious example of which can be found in Trilling's novel of post-Marxist recoil, *The Middle of the Journey*, in which John Laskell can take a stand on nothing more substantial than "negative capability" and his own loving meditation on a rose. With all vitality and assertion distributed to the characters whose moral standing is in question, the book's moral center is vacant of anything more exciting than a refusal to act. The "tragic sense of life" for which Trilling would lobby in later decades is latent in this strategic passivity, needing only the philosophical warrant of Freud's "death instinct" to be elevated from a *Weltschmerz* to a *Weltanschauung*.

Why, one is bound to ask, should anyone get excited about all this sackcloth? The profile Krupnick presents is uninspiring enough. Harold Rosenberg once remarked that when he first encountered the style of Lionel Trilling he looked for the joke and discovered there wasn't any. The answer is that one doesn't get "excited" about Trilling. One is simply, slowly drawn into his thought and learns eventually to appreciate its subtlety, its ripeness, its hesitant command. To struggle past the fastidious mannerisms of the late writing in *Beyond Culture* and *Sincerity and Authenticity*, is to discover a mind cautiously incandescent and stealthily adventurous.

Krupnick himself had once been impatient with Trilling. In 1971 he reviewed Trilling's *Literary Criticism: An Introductory Reader* in the pages of Philip Rahv's short-lived *Modern Occasions*, and dealt harshly with Trilling's "reverence for the customary and the established" and his "increasingly priggish distaste for less elevated conditions of being." That was an alarmed and politicized view of Trilling, created in part by the insurgent temper of the times, a temper that, in the main, Trilling greeted with a shrug of weariness. Krupnick's book is partly a reconsideration of those words: "I missed Trilling's leadership at the time and wrote about him with some bitterness in 1971," Krupnick concedes. "I am not disposed to judge him as harshly now as I did fifteen years ago."

> Given the uncertainties Trilling had about nearly everything, it was right for him to turn to history for understanding rather than to trumpet opinions about which he was unsure simply because, in his intellectual milieu, everyone was supposed to have a ready opinion about everything.

Contrition is a great teacher. *Lionel*

CHIEMSEE

A man rubs his beard on a woman's breast
in a small rented room,
the red flecks of skin a cartographer's "strange beauties"
vanishing on the map of her body.
He gets up, pays her
and she goes, her hair a mess.
Her axle-voice dying away down the hall.
He can't even get this close to those
in costume skiing the Steinplatte,
the tuba's belching omm-pahs for tourists.
He follows a man with some sheep
down a steep mountain pass, the sun
through a scrim of clouds
on a small knoll stained with droppings.
He plays this game, goes where no one will know him,
to edges where the air pierces his lungs.
It's as though he were a boy again running a hand
over a globe

and when the teacher says Augusta
or Baton Rouge he stops it with a finger
and says, there, I want to live there.
It's that random. By the time he reaches
the lake below, the castle like Disney's
has its towers ashimmer in sunlight.
On the backstreet he discovers a house of puppets,
some several feet tall with bicycle devices
to propel them. They're wood, metal and papier mâché
with eyes like cave openings, eyelids
like wings. Standing by an open window
a small boy says the sun is throwing out
all its little arms and legs
—what he calls the light
playing across the blue porcelain face
of a doll. He says he's a rocket
and pointing to his sister, "you're a telephone."
No, I'm an actress she says.
And the man is weeping.

*Richard Lyons*

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*Trilling and the Fate of Cultural Criticism* is a model of intellectual biography, scrupulous and precise, firmly grounded in Trilling's writing yet alive with speculation. Krupnick is also a first-rate writer, a quality that anyone who has slogged through clumsier books on contemporary culture is bound to appreciate. The book's most impressive quality is Krupnick's command of the cultural environment in which Trilling worked. That is more slippery terrain than one might suppose, for once a critic has exhausted the vein of anti-Stalinism that Trilling himself exhausted after *The Liberal Imagination*, he has to scale the higher regions of the cultural *Geist*, modernism, psychoanalysis, modern "weightlessness," the tragic sense of life, the rhetoric of authenticity, the adversary culture of the 1960s. He has to do his homework. The chapter "The Uses of Freud," which examines Trilling's strange turn toward biologism in the 1960s in the essays that make up *Beyond Culture*, is a small triumph of insight and exactness. To be biological in the 1960s suggested a turn toward Wilhelm Reich, but biology in Trilling's hands meant something far removed from Reich's world-transforming sexuality. It was, rather, an abstract principle of moral ballast, a counterforce to the cultural tides that were threatening to drown the modern ego. How one was to behave more biologically was never specified by Trilling, and one suspects he used the word more as a verbal icon than a social program. But as Krupnick argues, it was as items in the charter of modern selfhood that terms like "biology" and "beyond culture" and "energy" and "inertia" and "conditions" and "weightlessness" and "sincerity" and "authenticity") came to life for Trilling.

As death gathers the New York intellectuals into a generation—in Irving Howe's memorable phrase—they become fertile ground for critics and historians and, in due course, explicators and exegetes. With *Lionel Trilling and the Fate of Cultural Criticism*, Mark Krupnick has set a standard for such studies; the discussion starts on high ground. If the book does not make waves, that is only because the figure of Trilling is just now in eclipse. Our era cherishes other critical temperaments—the ferocious and polemical, the arcane and theoretical—and Trilling was neither. Krupnick's book is a strong argument for the middle ground of sensibility and a case in point of its continuing virtues. □

# ART.

## ARTHUR C. DANTO

**Eric Fischl**

When Martin Heidegger died, I was disconcerted to learn from the obituaries of that dark and knotted writer that he had been a connoisseur of fine wines. So luxurious and refined a cultivation was hardly to have been expected in one who spoke, with solemn and prophetic urgency, of authenticity and anguish, boredom and nothingness, death, being and abandonment. One would have imagined the table talk of that gnomic thinker to have consisted of Gothic monosyllables—*Sein! Zeit! Nicht! Tot! Raum! Geist!*—expressing gloomy and shattering profundities, rather than the Gallic frivolities with which the *Feinschmecker* strives to articulate the nuanced differences between Lafite '57 and Château Haut-Brion '46. There is a consistency demanded of prophets from which ordinary thinkers are exempt: their lives must cohere with their messages or we lose confidence in their revelations and imperatives. We would be surprised to learn that Craig Claiborne was constructing a system of metaphysics in his private moments, but we would not lose confidence in his recipes. We would not be surprised at all to learn that a ruler of mankind was a foot fetishist, and might see in this fact an even greater reason to fear him. But if we are as lost as Heidegger depicts us, ought we not to be spending all our time in finding ourselves, and not squander it on mastering a lexicon of delicate differences? And if *he* has time for that, how serious can the existential circumstances of the rest of us be, after all?

I know nothing of the life of Eric Fischl, but I was troubled by what I perceived as an inconsistency between an artistic direction his work seemed to be taking at a recent exhibition at the Mary Boone Gallery, and the overall temper of his painting as it appeared in a major show at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Fischl has been seen as a moralist, as a relentless holder of an ethical mirror in which are reflected, as images, our weak and sleazy moral profiles. One is certain that he means us to see ourselves reflected and, through recognizing our defects and shortcom-


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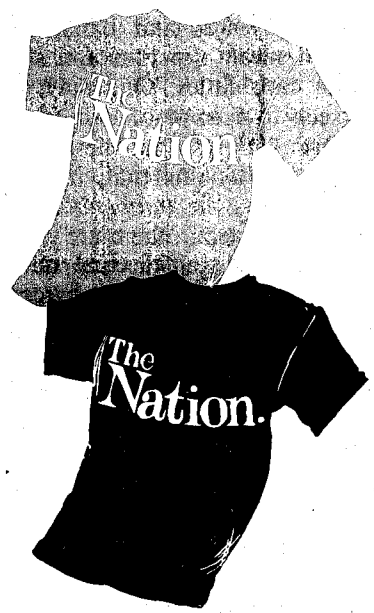


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ings, to begin to change our lives. More perhaps than with any other painter working today, the viewer has the sense that Fischl's work is about him or her, and that as subjects of these searching and accusatory representations, we are shown in a troubling judgmental light. There, before us, are all our nagging sexual indulgences and banal perversions and mean appetites and shallow spiritual capabilities. One may, to be sure, seek to exempt oneself from the unwavering *j'accuse* that energizes these paintings by thinking that, in contrast with ourselves, the *lumpenbourgeoisie* primarily depicted in them are too sunk in lowness and self-preoccupation to have eyes for works of art. But then there must be a complicity between the rest of us and this artist as judges of a soiled and sordid human type, the suburban eroticists Fischl depicts with the authority Hogarth claimed in connection with rakes and harlots, the empty couples locked in marriages of inconvenience. To be sure, they are not monsters of the sort that people the canvases of Leon Golub, so the moral distance between them and us is not vast. Even so, whether as judged or as judges, our relationship to them cannot be neutral, nor our relationship to the paintings themselves purely visual or aesthetic. If this is the case, then what, we want to know, is this artist doing experimenting with shaped canvases, as though he were a recent convert to an avant-garde concerned with exploring the formal problems of painting as painting? How are we to make such formal experiment coherent with the transformative project of awakening his viewers to the moral debilitations of their lives?

Philosophers concerned with the logic of moral discourse have been at pains to show that such language cannot merely be descriptive. It is meant to have some effect on its hearers beyond transmitting information. It exhorts, lobbies, prods, recommends, guides. And much the same must be said of images of morality, rare as their use has been in modern art. They express an attitude toward the unpretty scenes they represent, and seek to encourage a parallel attitude in their viewers. The tableaux on display at Mary Boone carry forward, on one level, that stance of condemnation and injunction that visitors to the Whitney found so unsettling. They are not merely pictures but indictments of the normal dissoluteness of ordinary persons in the wasteland of upscale housing, in patios and backyards by swimming pools or barbecue pits on balconies over beaches or on the beaches themselves, in the living room where they party or in the bedroom where they seek to rub or sleep away the itches of indulgence or the desperation of irremediable loneliness. So heavy is this atmosphere that even pictures not obviously part of that vision seem to acquire, by contagion, an aura of stigma and disapproval. There is, for example, a painting of a young girl kneeling on a bed, hugging a large black dog, and grinning out, somewhat vacantly, at the viewer. She is a bit like Little Orphan Annie with her sturdy canine consort wearing only cotton underpants and plastic curlers. A pubescent girl and her doggie: What is wrong with that? The surrounding pictures cause us to think nasty thoughts. Perhaps the curlers are out of place when worn by a girl still young enough for braces, hinting at a precocious carnality. And is the dog perhaps leering? The relationship between girl and dog begins to thicken with ugly innuendo, and suddenly one feels ready to gossip, to speculate, to cluck one's tongue. The innocence of what might have been a snapshot of a girl and her best friend is dissolved and replaced by a candid photograph of a slightly unsavory scene between a little tart and an unspeakable animal. The eye of the beholder is flooded by the mind of the moralist.

There is an unmistakable parallel between Fischl's manner of brushing paint generously across large areas and that of Bonnard, although, perhaps in keeping with Fischl's attitude toward his subjects, his paint feels somewhat sick and sticky, as though the sap that infuses Bonnard's pigment had been drained away. Bonnard's pigment retains the juicy warmth that infuses his sun-drenched gardens, or the fleshy re

## EMERGENCE OF A MONARCH BUTTERFLY

A single imago fractures its skin,
breaking open along markings
on its transparent back:
the first line, the third
and legs appear, pawing air.
The seventh line, a ring of gold
claws, sickle-shaped, a coiled
proboscis, and the head, shining,
pulling a swollen body free.
Naked antennae, tough integument,
everything holding: this leaf,
these strands of silk.

They will not emerge in darkness.
Not in rain.

Fed on milkweed, dogbane and tenacity,
one larva has come to this:
a butterfly, skeletal, clinging
to the narrow margin of afternoon.
It works the green blood through;
insect-need pumps the buds of wings
to size, circles of scales
expanding past fullness.

*This is not about survival, but desire.*

From its hanging point, the adult
hardens imperceptibly, acquiring
iridescence and a sense of thirst.
Now, in the moment before flight,
suspended by feet from
an empty chrysalis,
it binds into one the membranes
of its wet, double wings.

*Barbara Helfgott Hyett*

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silience of unclothed women toweling themselves down in a patch of light by a tub or basin. In a way, Fischl's connection to Bonnard carries an overcharge of sadness, as if the paint, whose application is so similar in gesture and command, had undergone the same degeneration as the subjects themselves. Fischl's people are Bonnard's people gone to pot, their flesh itself a metaphor for the decay of meaning in their lives. The women have puffy breasts and sagging bellies and empty looks. Their sexes are often splayed. The men have stiff and sullen pricks and toothy stupid grins. They are metamorphoses, into a bad era, of Bonnard's indolent men or women in that world of bourgeois certitude, in endless afternoons on perfect summer days in the south of France. Fischl has transferred them from villas to condominiums, from gardens to suburban terraces, where they wear the estments of modern leisure—Hawaiian hirts, Bermuda shorts and bikinis rather han summer frocks and leghorn straw ats—and wash pizza down with diet oda rather than partake of perfect tarts et on checkered cloths. They spread hemselves out on king-size beds before elevision sets they do not bother to ook at, or warm things up in kitchens quipped with new microwave ovens nd freezers and Touch-Tone telehones. Something has happened to the eace in Bonnard. Something has hapened to the domestic comfort celerated in the painting that culminated in onnard. And the change in the paint omehow emblematizes this negative ansformation.

Bonnard's people filled their afteroons with lovely, innocent pastimes, ith good things to eat and drink, with ets and flowers. Fischl's people transct little spasms in leisure-worlds of the oul gone dry. A boy is shown masturating in a plastic pool, before a pair of mpty chairs of the plastic-webbing and luminum-tubing variety sold at disount stores. Perhaps they have just een vacated by the boy's parents, and e seizes his sex and sways in solitary cstasy. The implied narrative I have ade explicit is not altogether speculaon: many of the paintings are like limactic slashes in narrative time. A lash in a pool, in "Christian Retreat," nplies the occupant of the now empty haise who has left behind cigarettes nd suntan lotion with his (or her?) Bible; grinning dad flashes approbation om the barbecue pit at a boy swallowing flame; a boy reaches into a woman's purse while she—for all we know, his mother—flashes her sex while doing a toenail; a naked girl trips across the dunes carrying a limp slice of pizza and a bottle, just as two youths leer with definite malice; a boozy couple seem about to head off and screw, leaving behind, in the living room, a boy dressed in a superman shirt and a girl in pink tights. A woman lies beside a station wagon in some kind of fit. She is surrounded by dogs. And a boy seems about to pull her pants off. Distracted by distraction from distraction, as T.S. Eliot put it, the personages in Fischl's world leave us with a sense of something having gone terribly wrong, with no clear notion of what to do or how to recover. Wherever we go there will be more of the same—tacky people splashing about in resorts and Club Meds, in the very waters where, in one painting, refugees flounder in inadequate boats under dark skies.

One does not paint such moral landscapes, it seems to me, unless one means to engage the conscience of the viewer who is, after all, never so distant from those landscapes that he can defer for very long grasping them as metaphors for his own life. One cannot wiggle out of the generalized indictment by insisting that one does not own a swimming pool or a king-size bed. The visitors to the Whitney exhibition tended to talk about "them," but surely they came to see that "they" are us, and that something in our lives must be modified, some resolution formed. Of course, the paintings may not detonate in the viewer's conscience in quite this way. There is a wonderful painting of a woman sitting naked, out-of-doors, her face hidden by a mirror in which she is lost in self-contemplation. Between her spread legs, on the ground, a magazine lies open. It shows what looks to me very like a self-portrait of Fischl beside an easel. The picture shows Fischl staring out, looking dark and intense. The woman is paying no attention: Fischl's work is not a mirror for her, since the mirror she holds in her hand reflects the only reality that concerns her. Titled "Vanity," the painting is clearly about its immediate subject, a woman peering into a glass. But it may also be about the vanity of the artist who has set out to change lives, and has failed.

The moral transformation of the viewer is an ancient and respected goal of art. It surely underlies the phenome-


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non of catharsis in Aristotle, and it defined the priorities of censorship in Plato's political aesthetics. In Plato's view, there is a complex transitivity between spectator, artwork and artistic subject which entails that we literally become what we see, so that the art of the republic must be central in the formation of its citizenry. The admonitory, cautionary representation of the virtues and the vices animates much of Christian art, and the art of the Counter-reformation was explicitly intended to co-implicate the viewer in the suffering of displayed martyrs. And throughout the nineteenth century, values were meant to be reinforced by rhetorical representations of goodness and wickedness. Aesthetics, with its curious notions of disinterest and delectation, was very much an eighteenth-century invention, and except for that period, and again with the Impressionists and Cézanne, art has always been part of the arsenal of moral education. Twentieth-century art has been marked by a series of philosophical experiments intended to isolate the essence of art, and the waning of that impulse in very recent years is precisely what has made it possible for a painter like Eric Fischl to assume a different and traditional artistic role, to bring painting back into life, rather than to act, as artists have been doing, within the isolating atmosphere of an art world for the sophisticated theoreticians that compose its population. But this returns me to my question: what is *this* artist doing playing with shaped canvases and compound panels?

In the Whitney exhibition there are pieces composed of double panels—diptychs—but in every instance the result makes artistic sense. The juxtapositions are those we might see in an altarpiece, with the saved on one side and the damned on the other. Two scenes strengthen each other's message, or narrow it, as with the vacationers on the left and the boat people on the right. Or with the woman, alone, opening the door of her condo, witnessed by a dog, while another woman is shown opposite on that same balcony, her bathing suit bottom down around her ankles, staring at the erection of her moronic youthful companion. The two scenes express the horns of some unedifying dilemma. But this is not the way the panels work in the large compositions at the Mary Boone. The scenes splash portentously across multiple panels, without it being clear why they do so. Why is a panel showing a running dog tacked onto a complex panel showing the usual characters at their sterile recreations? It is as though Fischl had decided to become an experimenter, pointing away from life in the direction of art-world theoretics, concerned with questions of shape and surface, of flatness and edge, concerned, at this late date, to define painting rather than to say something disturbing about masturbation, molestation, loneliness, incest, bestiality, lust, sloth, intemperance, vanity, cupidity, selfishness and loss.

You cannot fuse into a coherent concept propositions about painterly re-education and instructions to better one's moral condition. You cannot form a coherent audience out of those in the shadows of moral perdition and those obsessed with the metaphysics of painting. And without strenuous and largely misdirected interpretative efforts it is difficult to dispel, for all the power of his imagery and the certainty of his painterly reflexes, the sense that Fischl has lost his way in these new works, with their irrelevant puzzles and inflated allegory. □

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## SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2104

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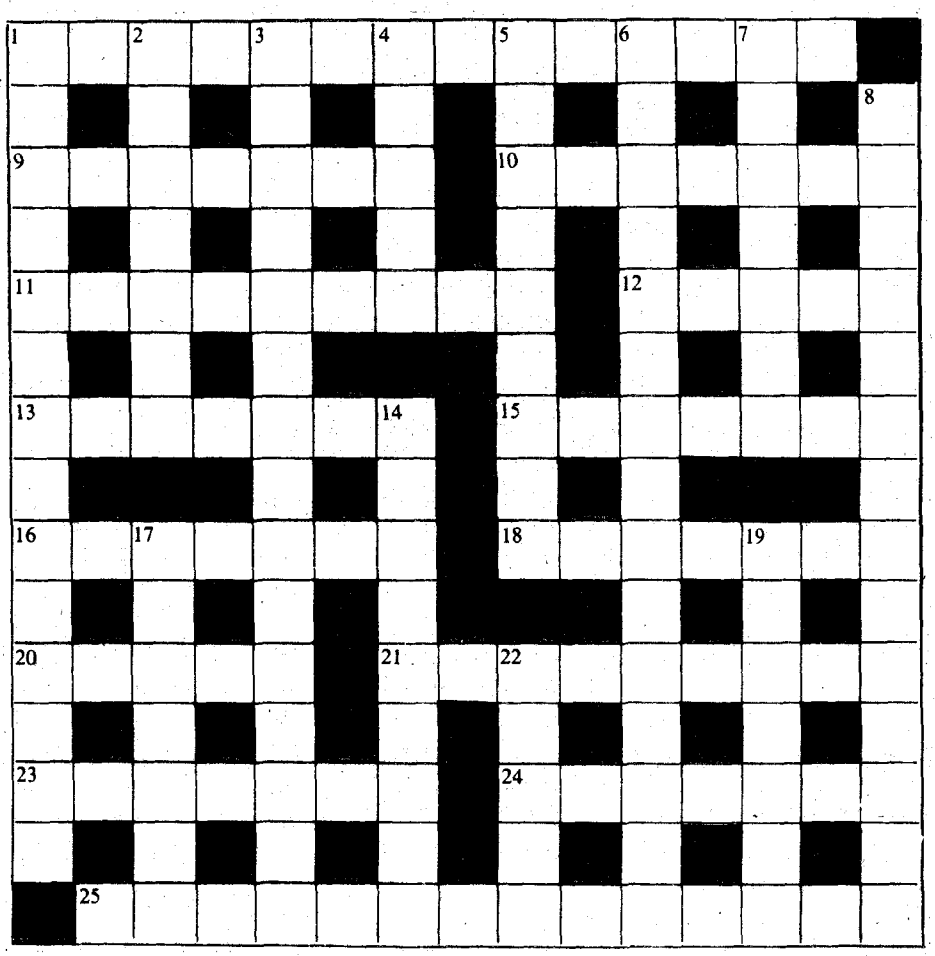
# Crossword Puzzle No. 2105

FRANK W. LEWIS



### ACROSS

1 It sounds like what they once did when one complained of a stomachache is to be a subject for college students. (7,7)
9 Is "all rite" all wrong, adhering to the usual meaning? (7)
10 It might get bashed in by an "ash can," and sink. (7)
11 How small boats may approach big ones suggests a hypotenuse. (9)
12 Standoffish, and a backward, rather 15-type. (5)
13 Means something in the side not especially obvious. (7)
15 To get into the Presidio, tickets are obviously necessary, but this is stupid! (7)
16 Excel, alternatively made so, but not inside. (7)
18 Possibly traveled by a tramp. (An easel might have to be adjusted to hold it.) (3,4)
20 It's the simplest of orders, when a cord is knotted about one. (5)
21 One has a triangle-shaped body and a long neck and might work when some play. (9)
23 Might be crossed by Europeans and switched by impatient Americans. (7)
24 Approaches to get water out of the well and take a little drink. (5,2)
25 One probably has to go first class, but when level, no deep sea disturbance. (6,8)

### DOWN

1 Is everyone trying to cut the cards at once? (Many might be debunked by this calling.) (3,5,2,4)
2 Possibly a public social demotion. (3-4)
3 This might keep many plants supplied, but it's an artificial flower, in a sense. (10,5)
4 A model hideout, in part, but it represents capital only if new. (5)
5 Chrysolites? When missing—Lo!—they cause an emotional frenzy (9)
6 Every so often, a teacher might get this, with the available ABC set incorrectly. (10,5)
7 What one might do to articles, instead of saving paper. (4,3)
8 Paragon? (7,7)
14 Wasn't a good writer, though started out like a scribe, and lost some precious fluid. (9)
17 In a way, create about the right sort of a architecture? (7)
19 Proving the old poet has airs, too! (7)
22 The French study what might be loaded, obviously. (5)

**PUZZLED?**
No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

LOCAL ONE GRAPHICS X-523

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